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Editor's letter

As a nation and as gardeners, we find ourselves in transient times. Where once we worked on our gardens now it feels as if our gardens are working on us. Garden – as much as home – is where the heart lies.

The garden of designer Alasdair Cameron and his free-spirited family in Devon is bursting with colour and myriad inflorescence. *Salvia involucrata* 'Hadspen', *Salvia confertiflora*, the red velvet sage fill tubs; there are sweeping borders dotted with umbels – spare parsnips from the vegetable garden a metre high – an enclosed space of scented things, green-leaved, beehive beech and a camomile lawn. An idyll, it is quietly outward looking; new plants arrive in environmentally kind hessian and the design is grounded in Devon's fields and farming. It is a place to play and nurture plants.

One of the loveliest attributes of *Nicotiana* is that they are mostly night-scented. As well as being exceptionally good for adding deft colour to the flower garden, nicotianas are at their best at dusk. Head gardener Matthew Reese selects the very best; elegant, architectural and straightforward to grow from seed.

Also with late nights outside in mind, in Kitted Out this month we highlight the most stylish kit for evenings in the garden.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

JASON INGRAM

Alasdair Cameron's relaxed garden is grounded in the surrounding Devon landscape, page 52.

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RICHARD BLOOM

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Contributors

JASON INGRAM

Claire Takacs

Claire photographs, the studio garden of Spanish design practice Lur, page 78. *"I absolutely loved this garden and agree with Noel Kingsbury that it's one of the most exciting and unique gardens."*

Isabel Bannerman

Isabel visits the private garden of designer Alasdair Cameron, page 52. *"It was a real treat to be asked to visit this gem of a garden and get drawn in by the maker's magnetic magic."*

Matthew Reese

Matthew shares his favourite nicotianas, page 44. *"In the evening, when the garden is at its nicest, the tobaccos turn on, flowers open and cast an enchanting scent through the air."*

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY

James Basson

James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

Fergus Garrett

Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

Anna Pavord

Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson

Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price

Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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Dig in

What's happening, what's in flower and what to buy this month

CLAIRE TAKACS

Expert knowledge

The opportunity to access expert learning has taken a leap forward over the past few months, with a wealth of online lectures and masterclasses now available from gardens and gardeners worldwide. Great Dixter, one of the UK's most iconic gardens, is hosting monthly lectures from head gardener Fergus Garrett, highlighting his influential approach to planting, gardening and biodiversity. His next topic is Integrating Annuals and Biennials in your Borders, live on 29 July and again on 1 August. Alongside Fergus's lectures, also keep an eye out for talks from Dixter's gardener-cook, and *Gardens Illustrated* columnist, Aaron Bertelsen, covering advice on plot-to-plate gardening and recipes from the Great Dixter kitchen. Lectures cost £15, full details of upcoming lectures, and links to previous talks available on demand can be found at **greatdixter.co.uk/whats-on**

News

COMPILED BY DAISY BOWIE-SELL

M MORRIS

House party

*Among five new National Plant Collections announced by Plant Heritage is Mercy Morris's collection of 18 spider plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*) cultivars. Mercy wants to dispel the misconception that there is only one type of spider plant and in time she hopes to expand her collection to further species in the* Chlorophytum *genus.* ***plantheritage.org.uk***

Finding a new use for lost gardens

Recipients of a charity's veg bag scheme in Cornwall found some unexpected gourmet veg in their bags this spring. Unable to access its nursery during lockdown, the horticultural charity People and Gardens, which helps people with learning disabilities or emotional impairments through horticulture, was in danger of closing the scheme until the furloughed garden team from The Lost Gardens of Heligan volunteered to supply veg – including some heritage potatoes – from Heligan's productive gardens, keeping the veg bag scheme stocked and the charity funded. **heligan.com**

Sweet spot

Winners of the Horticultural Trade Association's annual, new plant awards have been announced. The overall winner was *Malus* 'Trinity' (far left), a red-fleshed, early cooking apple, by amateur breeder Jerzy Bartoszewicz, which was entered by, and is available from, Frank P Matthews (**frankpmatthews.com**), while the raspberry, *Rubus idaeus* 'Groovy', from Dutch breeder Vitis-Idaea, won gold for Darby Nursery Stock, and is available from Suttons (**suttons.co.uk**).

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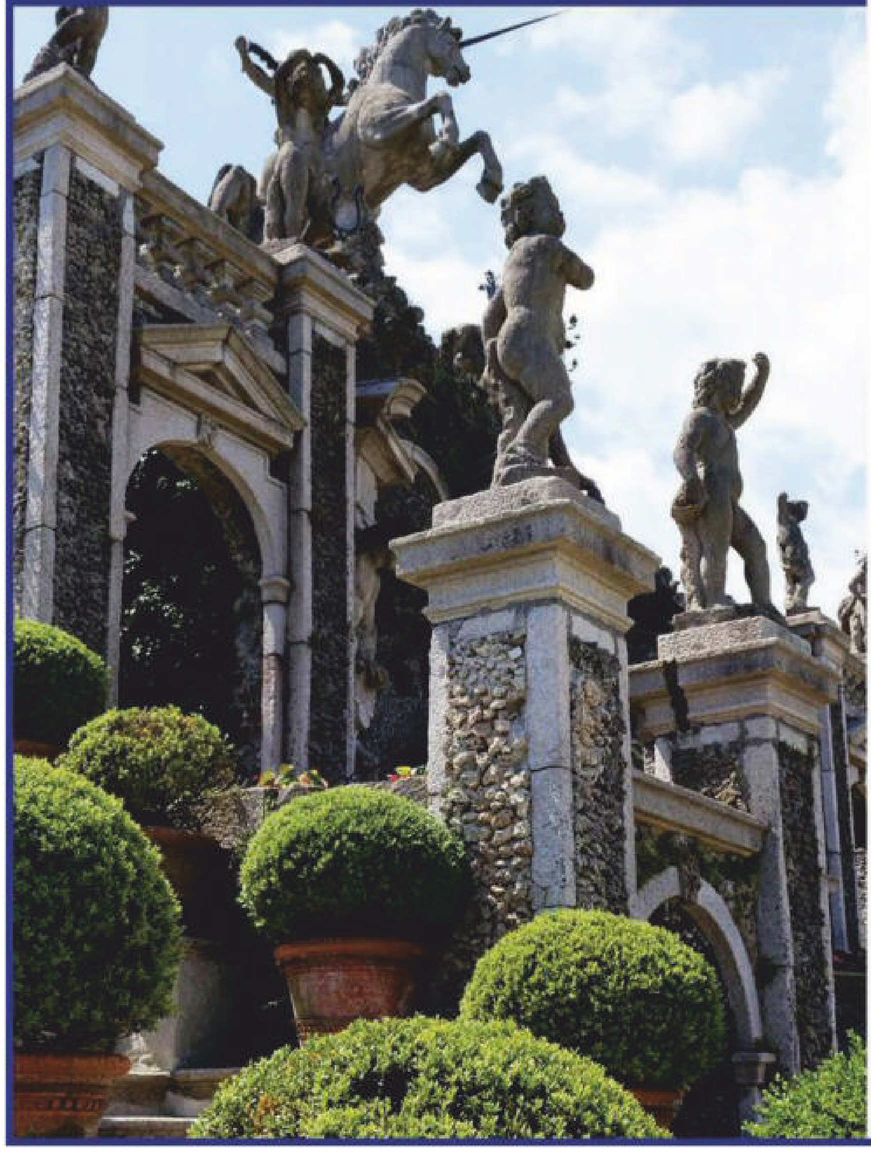

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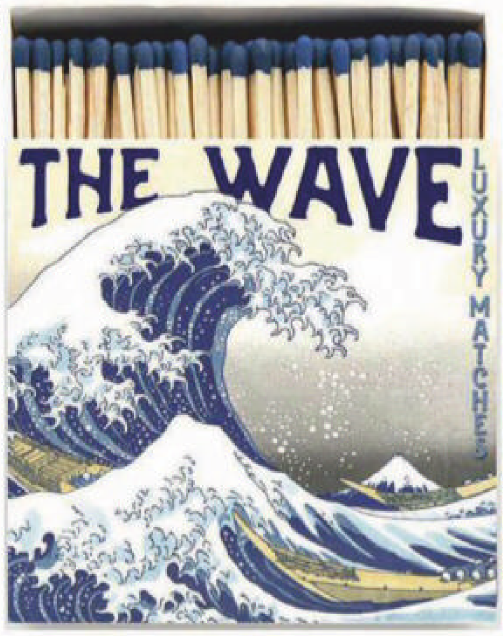
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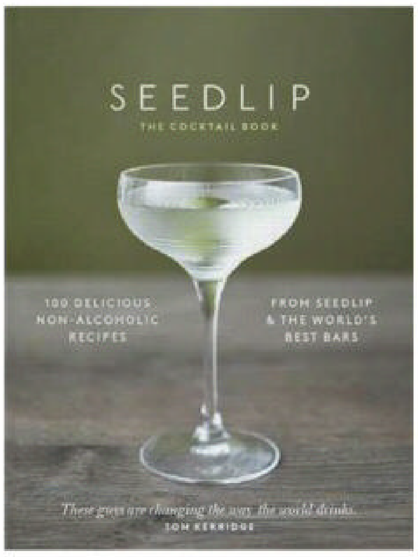
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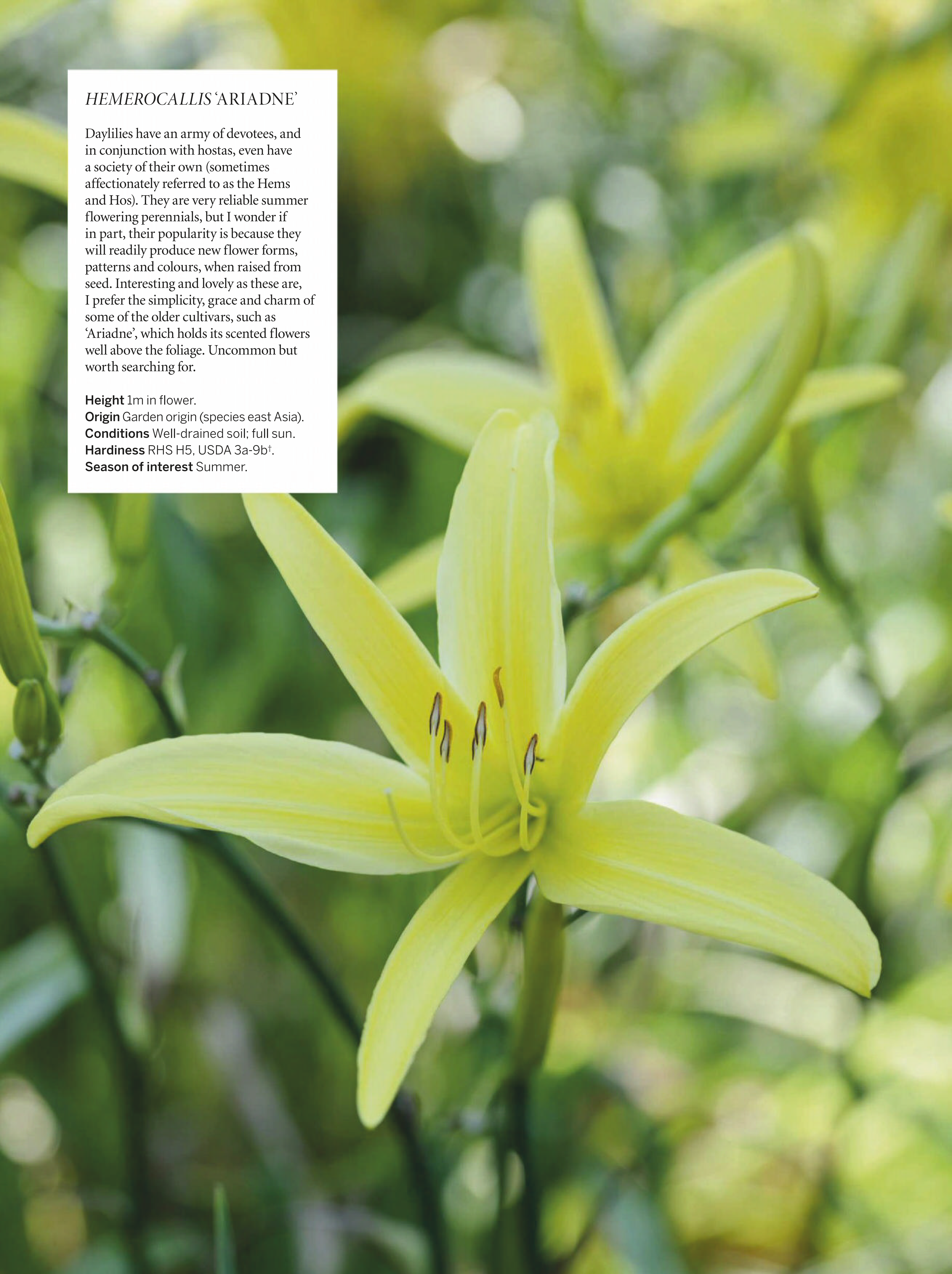
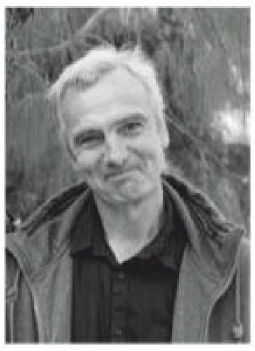
HEMEROCALLIS ‘ARIADNE’

Daylilies have an army of devotees, and in conjunction with hostas, even have a society of their own (sometimes affectionately referred to as the Hems and Hos). They are very reliable summer flowering perennials, but I wonder if in part, their popularity is because they will readily produce new flower forms, patterns and colours, when raised from seed. Interesting and lovely as these are, I prefer the simplicity, grace and charm of some of the older cultivars, such as ‘Ariadne’, which holds its scented flowers well above the foliage. Uncommon but worth searching for.

Height 1m in flower.
Origin Garden origin (species east Asia).
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b[†].
Season of interest Summer.





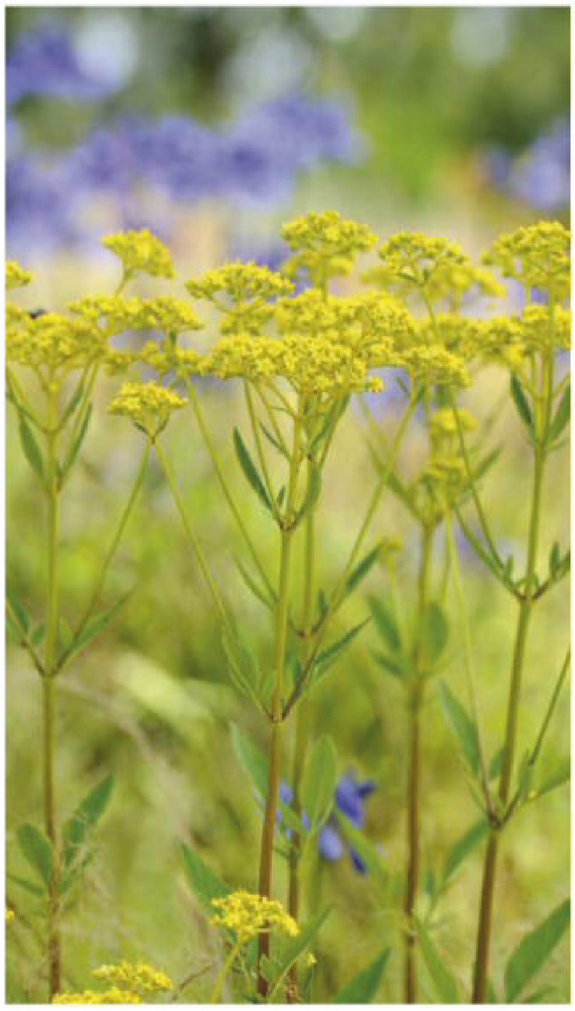
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

July plants

From elegant and colourful lilies to a graceful grass and two small trees that offer delicate summer flowers, Keith has much to recommend for July

WORDS KEITH WILEY PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Keith Wiley runs Wildside nursery in Devon **wileyatwildside.com**



PATRINIA SCABIOSIFOLIA

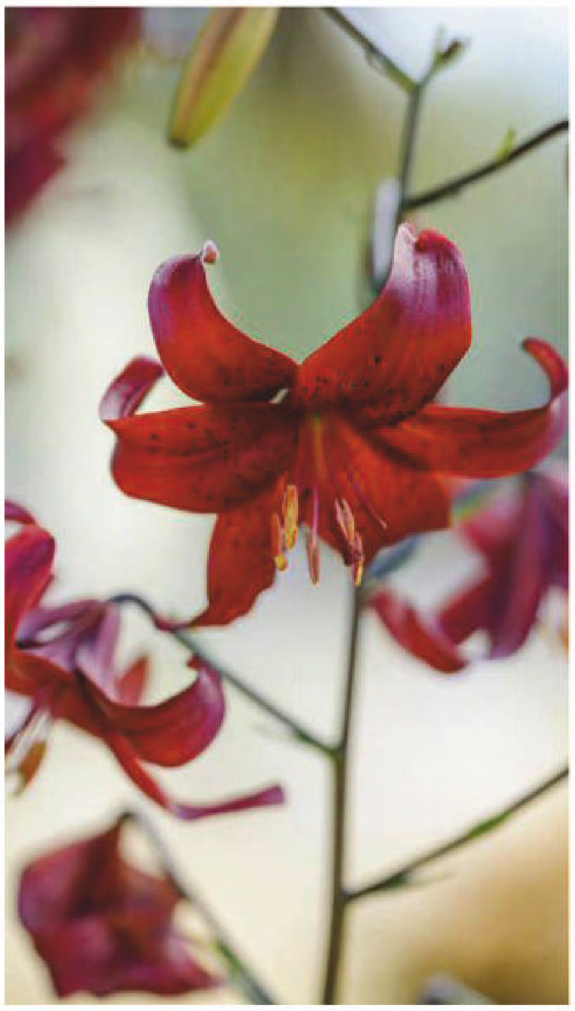
As a general rule, the plants I like the most are those that exhibit a symmetry and beauty through the whole of their growing season. A beautiful flower is simply not enough, so I'm afraid a hybrid tea rose just doesn't cut it for me. But with this plant I'm happy to bend the rules slightly. Because despite the rather ordinary basal foliage – which you can't see in his image – this is a plant that has grace and form in spades. The flat heads of small flowers are an insect magnet with their colour accentuated in the upper flower stems. In flower, it is slightly reminiscent of a yellow *Verbena bonariensis*.

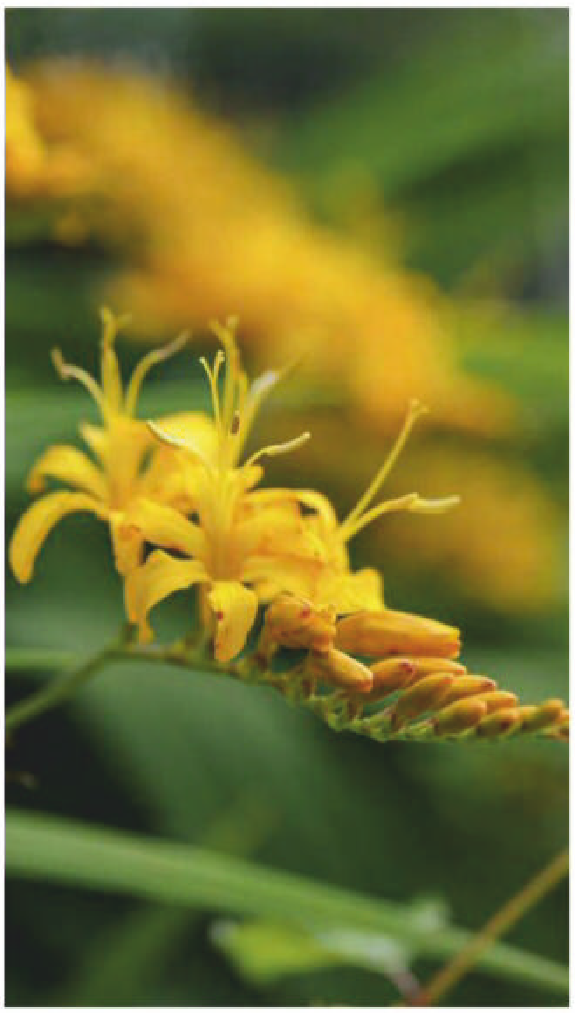
Height 1-1.5m.
Origin Eastern Asia.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.
Season of interest Summer.

LILIUM 'RED VELVET'

There are any number of lilies I would have loved to have included this month, but in the end that tricky decision was made for me when this one ended up looking especially lovely on the day the photographs were taken. It is an elegant hybrid Asiatic lily that has retained some of the charm of lily species, with up to 20 swept-back, Turk's cap flowers of dark, rich red on each stem. It is sadly scentless but it is capable of growing up to 2m high when happy. Fabulous in a spot where the flowers can be backlit by sunlight. It prefers more alkaline conditions, so is less tall on my acidic soil.

Height 1-2m.
Origin Garden origin (species east Asia).
Conditions Well-drained, preferably alkaline, soil; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.
Season of interest Summer.





CROCOSMIA MASONIORUM 'ROWALLANE YELLOW'

Of the many crocosmias I grow, this is the one I would be most lost without. I am clearly not alone in my affection for this plant as this is also one of the plants we are most asked about by visitors to our garden. Highly floriferous, it is both graceful and elegant in flower – which it does for a very long time – and also offers a good balance between leaf and flower. These are all attributes not always associated with many of the red cultivars with a similar flower shape and habit. Easy to grow it is equally as easy on the eye. AGM*.

Height 1.2m.
Origin Garden origin (species from South Africa).
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest Summer.

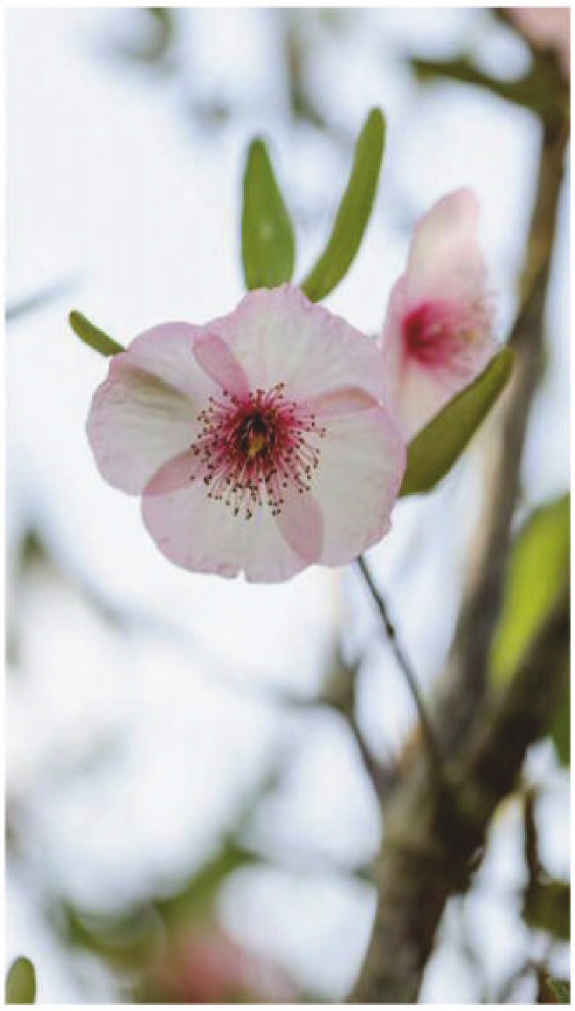
---

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. Hardiness ratings given where available.

ORIGANUM 'KENT BEAUTY'

Although origanums are closely related to the herb marjoram, this is a purely ornamental low-growing plant for a sunny, well-drained site. The flowerheads strongly resemble miniature hop flowers and the floral bracts, which turn pink, last for months in the summer, long after the actual flowers have faded. Both of its parents are native to the Mediterranean area so it is not a fan of wet conditions, especially during its winter dormancy. Cold hardy and happy in the open garden in drier areas, it is also content to grow in containers in wetter climates. AGM.

Height 15-20cm.
Origin Garden origin (species from Mediterranean).
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.
Season of interest All summer.



HOHERIA 'GLORY OF AMLWCH'

Hoherias are small, flowering trees that make wonderful focal points among the massed ranks of flowering perennials that dominate our gardens at this time of year. For many years, they were considered slightly tender, but, given a sunny, well-drained spot they seem remarkably resilient. As they are also quick growing, I've used them as nurse trees, to protect slower growing plants beneath, and even as windbreaks. This cultivar makes a gently arching rounded small tree reliably covering itself in flowers.

Height 5-6m.
Origin Garden origin (species from New Zealand).
Conditions Most well-drained soils; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.
Season of interest Summer.

EUCRYPHIA LUCIDA 'BALLERINA'

Eucryphia is another genus of useful summer-flowering small trees, nearly all with white flowers. *Eucryphia lucida* is normally an upright small tree with white flowers, in its native Tasmania, but two pink-flowered forms were found growing wild there by Ken Gillanders, who named them 'Pink Cloud' and 'Ballerina'. I prefer the latter, which covers itself in scented flowers, prettily picotee-edged in pink, for most of the summer. Much admired here, its upright habit, small evergreen foliage and overall dimensions make it suitable for gardens of almost any size. AGM.

Height 3-4m.
Origin Tasmania.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.
Season of interest All summer.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best*

* Be sure to check opening times and advice on possible travel restrictions in advance

For lovers of flowers July is the month when many gardens are looking at their best. And combined with long daylight hours and, hopefully, warm, sunny weather July is the perfect month to visit them, especially this year when we've gone so long without a visit and large-scale gatherings at flower shows are still off limits. There are so many gardens now reopening, it almost seems unfair to single any out. But the gardens of siblings June and Jimi Blake, across the water in Blessington near Dublin, are two I would always make an effort to visit. Both are exceptional plantspeople who have made remarkable gardens in different areas of the old family's estate, each with its own distinctive style and flavour, and both are jewels among Irish gardens.

June's is known simply as **June Blake's Garden** and of the two it has a more formal structure with plantings that show off her considerable artistic flair. Tinode, Blessington, Co. Wicklow, Ireland. Tel +353 (0)87 277 0399, juneblake.ie

Jimi's better known garden, **Hunting Brook**, is set primarily around a magnificent natural woodland through which the brook of its name tumbles. Hunting Brook Gardens, Lamb Hill, Blessington, Co. Wicklow ▷

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VERBENA RIGIDA F. *LILACINA* 'POLARIS'

Some plants are so reliable you can take them for granted and others so unpredictable it is always a joy to see them return each summer, a bit like the swallows in recent years. This low-growing verbena definitely comes into the second category. It is reputedly half-hardy, but whether it is the cold or wet conditions that make its winter dormancy debilitating I do not know. Usually it returns and obliges by covering itself in insect friendly, small heads of a beautiful soft purple that harmonises perfectly with so many other colours. AGM.

Height 45-60cm.
Origin Brazil and Argentina.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.
Season of interest All summer.

DIGITALIS FERRUGINEA

This is the rusty foxglove that comes from the eastern Mediterranean area. Our own native foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*, is lovely in the wilder parts of gardens, but for me it is too bulky in leaf and short-lived for intensive mixed plantings. Not so, the rusty foxglove, especially in gravel gardens or plantings trying to capture a semi-arid ambience where its narrowly upright spires of flowers create metre-high accent points. It is short-lived and does self-seed but the foliage of its seedlings is smaller, neater and more companion-friendly than our native foxglove. AGM.

Height 90cm-1.2m.
Origin Italy to Transcaucasus.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.
Season of interest Summer.

STIPA GIGANTEA

The giant oat grass is far from uncommon but it surely has to be one of the most eye-catching large grasses found in UK gardens. Plant it somewhere where the summer evening sun can reach it, and you will introduce a magical quality in that golden light of a lowering sun. Preferring full sun, the narrowly arching leaves grow 60-90cm high, topped by a wide fountain of flowering stems reaching up to two metres. It can self-seed, and seedlings can disappoint, so best buy a named cultivar, such as the taller (at 2.5m) *Stipa gigantea* 'Gold Fontaene' or the shorter *S. gigantea* 'Pixie' and *S. gigantea* 'Goldilocks'. AGM.

Height 1.5-2m.
Origin Iberia and Morocco.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-10b.
Season of interest All summer.

▷ W91 Yk33, Ireland. Tel +353 (0)87 285 6601, huntingbrook.com

If I had to choose a single genus that could encapsulate my memories of midsummer it would be the lilies, especially those that carry that intoxicating scent. There will be lilies in many summer gardens I'm sure, but I was surprised with such a large and diverse genus to find only two National Collections, both of the Mylnefield lilies, also known as the North Hybrids as they are a group of elegant hybrids bred by Dr Christopher North for conditions experienced in Scotland. One of these collections is held at **Parkhead Gardens** in Perth, which is open again, by appointment only. Parkhead House, Burghmuir Road, Perth PH1 1JF. Tel 01738 625983, parkheadgardens.com

North Hybrids can also be seen in **Branklyn Garden**, which is also in Perth and which also reopens this month on a more regular basis. Branklyn Garden, 116 Dundee Road, Perth PH2 7BB. Tel 01738 625535, nts.org.uk

Staying north, but south of the border, the gardens of **Newby Hall** in Yorkshire are always worth a visit in high summer, and are best known for their long, double herbaceous borders. Newby Hall, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 5AE. Tel 01423 322 583, newbyhall.com

Closer to home **Cotehele** is one of several National Trust gardens reopening. But you will need to book your visit in advance. St Dominick, nr Saltash, Cornwall PL12 6TA. Tel 01579 351346, nationaltrust.org.uk

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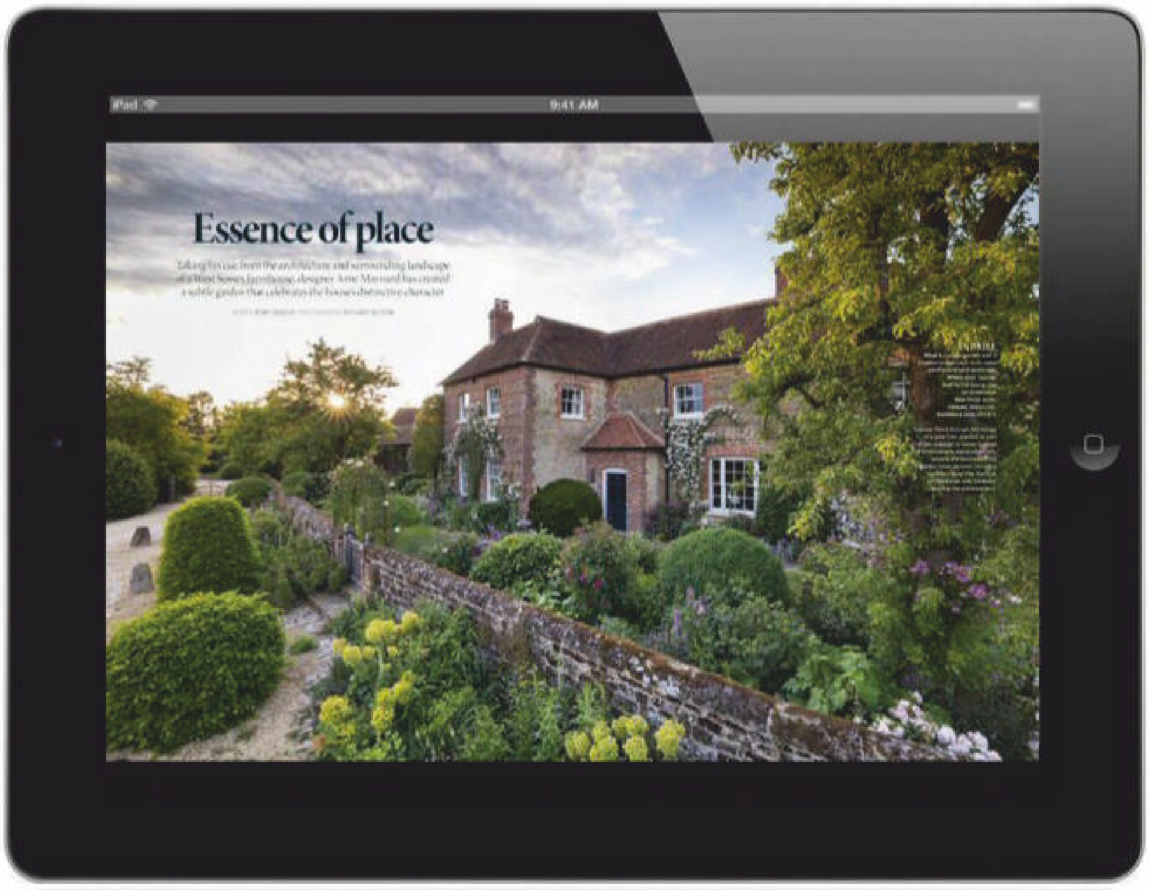
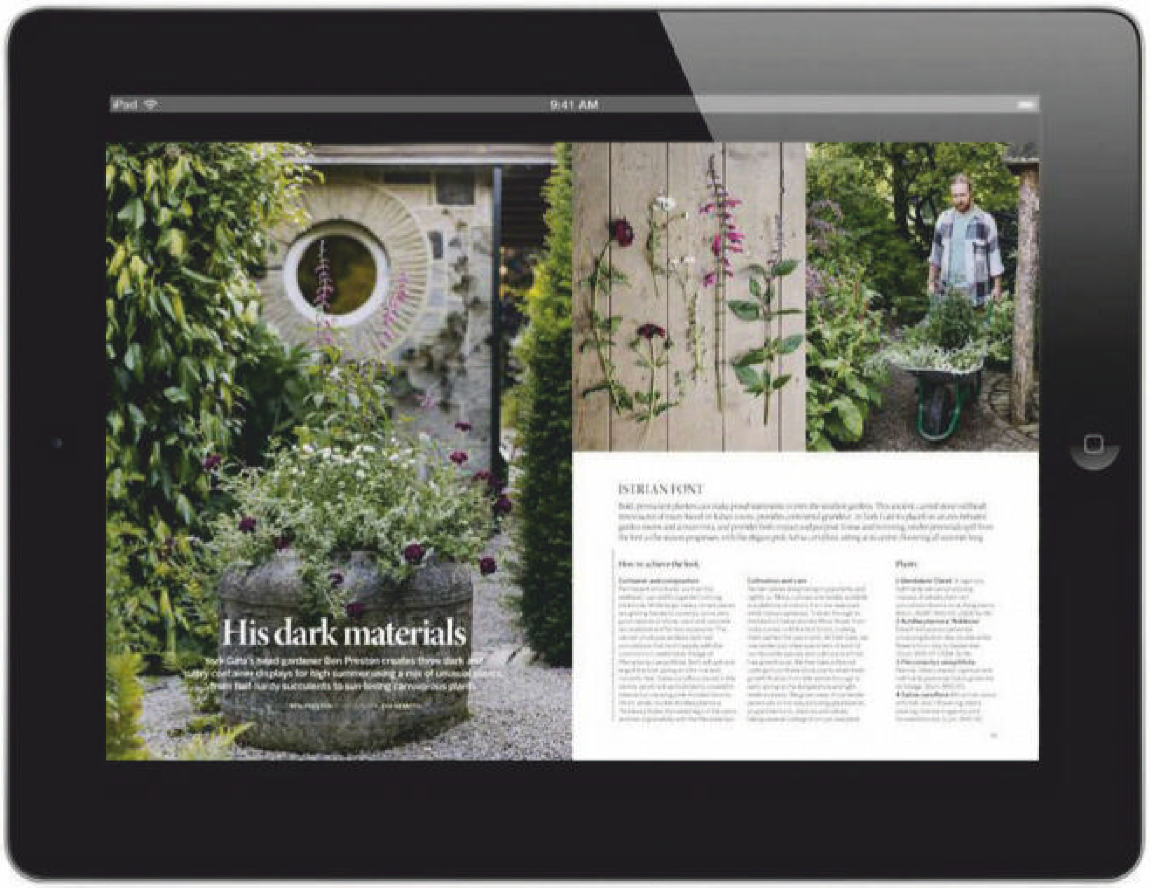

Essence of place


His dark materials

July plants

A must-have read for passionate gardeners, *Gardens Illustrated* magazine provides a unique insight into the world's most beautiful gardens, expert advice and planting ideas.

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SALAD DAYS

July is mainly a month of maintenance, of watering, feeding and pruning, as well as a time to pause and take pleasure in your achievements. But there are still crops to sow, from salads and herbs to peas, and soft fruit to put to good use

WORDS AARON BERTELSEN
ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

This is – if we're lucky – peak summer. Sun-baked days and balmy evenings mark a change of pace in the vegetable garden, and one that is most welcome after the frantic activity of the past few months. For the most part, July is a month for maintenance, although there are a few crops such as parsley, fennel, peppery salad leaves and even peas that will do well sown now. Weeding is easy on dry ground with a good sharp Dutch hoe – just leave the weeds on the surface of the soil, where they can break down and enrich it – and regular picking will help to keep crops productive and stop them running to seed in the heat.

Then of course there is the watering. This is the time of year when I give myself a metaphorical pat on the back for all the hard work I put in during the winter adding compost to the soil. Whether you are a digger like me or a disciple of the no-dig approach, adding organic matter really does make all the difference in terms of the soil's texture and ability to hold moisture. At this time of year, when the weather is warm, I will leave the sprinkler on an area for an hour at a time, once a week. I use a 360-degree sprinkler, mounted on a sturdy pole. I find that watering from a height is more efficient – more of it seems to hit the soil, with less bouncing off the leaves.

The other really important thing to remember during these long, warm days is to stop. Yes, really. I know I am always giving you long lists of things to do, but there is a time to pause and take pleasure in your achievements too. Whether you have an extensive plot or a small collection of pots on a balcony, it is there to be enjoyed, ideally with a glass of something chilled and delicious in your hand. ❒

Jobs for July

For the last couple of years I have enjoyed fresh peas well into the autumn. How? By making a second sowing in July. As the first lot of plants go over, pull them out, making sure to leave the pea sticks in place. Sow your second crop direct, leaving about 10cm between each pea, and water in well.

For years I dismissed curly leaved parsley as useful only for fiddly garnishes. How wrong I was. This herb overwinters well for us and the flavour grows more pronounced with the cold. Sow now to ensure a plentiful supply for those winter salads.

This is also the perfect time for sowing peppery salad leaves such as rocket, mizuna and mustard greens. This way you will avoid attack by flea beetle and ensure a good crop going into the colder months.

Fennel sown now is less likely to bolt and will be ready to crop in autumn and early winter.

This is the perfect timing for pruning trained fruit. With summer pruning, the aim is to reduce new growth, in order to keep the tree in shape to let in light and sunshine so the fruit can ripen. As a general guide, remove all upright growth, and cut back any new growth that is longer than 20cm to five leaves. As in winter, take the opportunity to remove any diseased wood or growth that is crossing over or close together that may end up rubbing.

Maincrop potatoes will need feeding. They are hungry creatures and will not crop well for you if they run out of food. I use liquid tomato feed.

Crops in pots will need regular watering – that means every day for the more delicate things like salad leaves. Don't forget to feed them too. A weekly dose of liquid seaweed will work wonders. Make sure you are watering the soil, not the leaves, unless you are particularly fond of the taste of seaweed.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CROPS

First and second early potato cropping should be in full swing now. The main challenge is to get all the potatoes out without accidentally sticking a fork or spade through them – particularly challenging in our heavy clay soil. Any tubers that are left in the soil will pop up as weeds next summer, and could also spread blight. I am increasingly growing my potatoes in bags. It makes them very easy to earth up, and harvesting takes minutes. If space permits, try growing them in a one-tonne bag – the type you get with a bulk delivery of compost or bark.

July is also the month of plenty when it comes to soft fruit. I am not a huge fan of freezing food – it is so easy to forget what you have in there, and over time food will lose some of its goodness and flavour. But used wisely, it is a very helpful resource in times of glut. I stash some bags of fruit in the freezer ready to make jam in the autumn when things in the garden are quieter. But one thing I do always make time for is a fruit vodka – best made with fruit that is absolutely at its peak of freshness and flavour.

You can find Aaron's delicious fruit vodka recipe at gardensillustrated.com/recipes

GARDENING TALENT

LAURA MELLOR

As West Dean's first Jim Buckland and Sarah Wain Scholarship student, Laura is being trained in a range of gardening skills

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest gardening memory I remember sowing carrots with my mum – I thought of it as some kind of miracle when we harvested them, warts and all.

Career inspiration My mother; she is a florist, and has a wonderful sense of colour and a keen eye for shape and texture.

Have you always wanted to be a gardener? Gardening is a second career for me; I worked as a therapist for ten years, training in sports massage and aromatherapy, which provided me with transferable skills, but I started to miss the countryside and came to realise that I wanted to work outside.

Most valuable training My first full-time role working outside was on a pick-your-own farm and it was great training – getting stuck in and experiencing all weathers. I think that helped when it came to my apprenticeship here at West Dean. There's so much I'm experiencing for the first time, from working in the glasshouses, to planting trees in the arboretum, to training fruit trees. I'm loving the opportunity to learn, see and absorb.

Horticultural hero The late David Austin for his determination, patience and contribution to the world of roses, bringing fragrance and beauty to so many gardens.

Favourite landscape This would have to be the Cornish coastline, particularly the north coast on the Celtic Sea, which is more exposed and means the sea and landscape has a wilder nature.

Three worthwhile tips for every gardener Make sure you reuse, recycle and renew where you can; encourage beneficial organisms into your garden, such as hoverflies and ladybirds that eat aphids and other insects, and if in doubt add organic matter.

Favourite planting style I recently went to a talk about Piet Oudolf's Hauser & Wirth garden at Durslade Farm in Somerset; I really enjoy his naturalistic planting style and how his choice of plants can be admired throughout the seasons.

One way to be more sustainable in your garden Picking up on the tip I mentioned above – include a variety of trees, shrubs and climbers in your garden. The more habitats you provide the greater the variety of insects that are likely to take up residence.

Next big project Tom Brown took over from Sarah and Jim at West Dean a year ago. There's some landscaping projects and lots of new planting and trialling ideas. This year we've trialled 64 foxglove species and cultivars.

Contact lauramellorhealth@gmail.com

Scholarship details westdean.org.uk/about/support-us/appeal

> I worked as a therapist for ten years, but I started to miss the countryside

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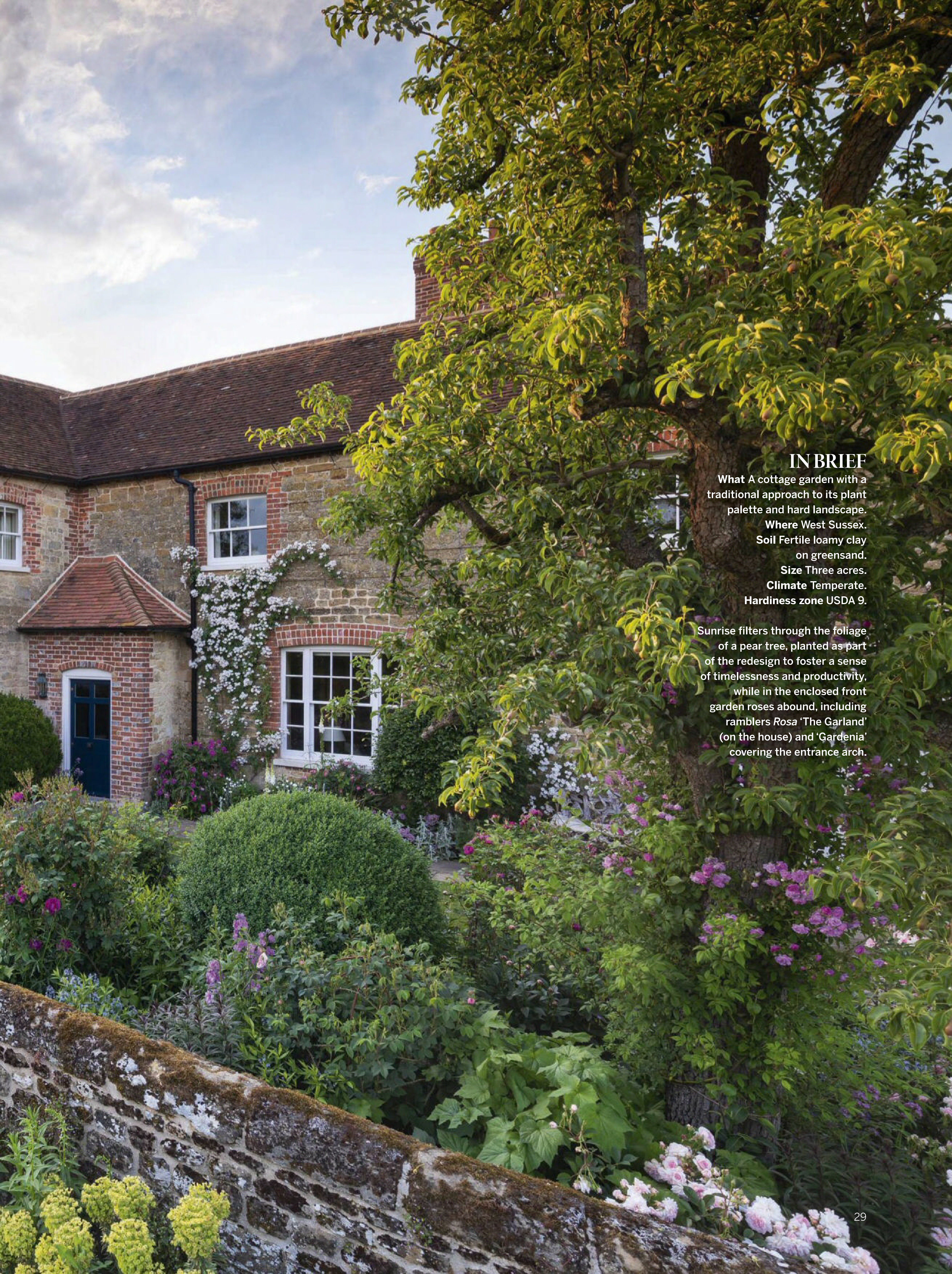
Essence of place

Taking his cue from the architecture and surrounding landscape of a West Sussex farmhouse, designer Arne Maynard has created a subtle garden that celebrates the house's distinctive character

WORDS RORY DUSOIR PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM



IN BRIEF

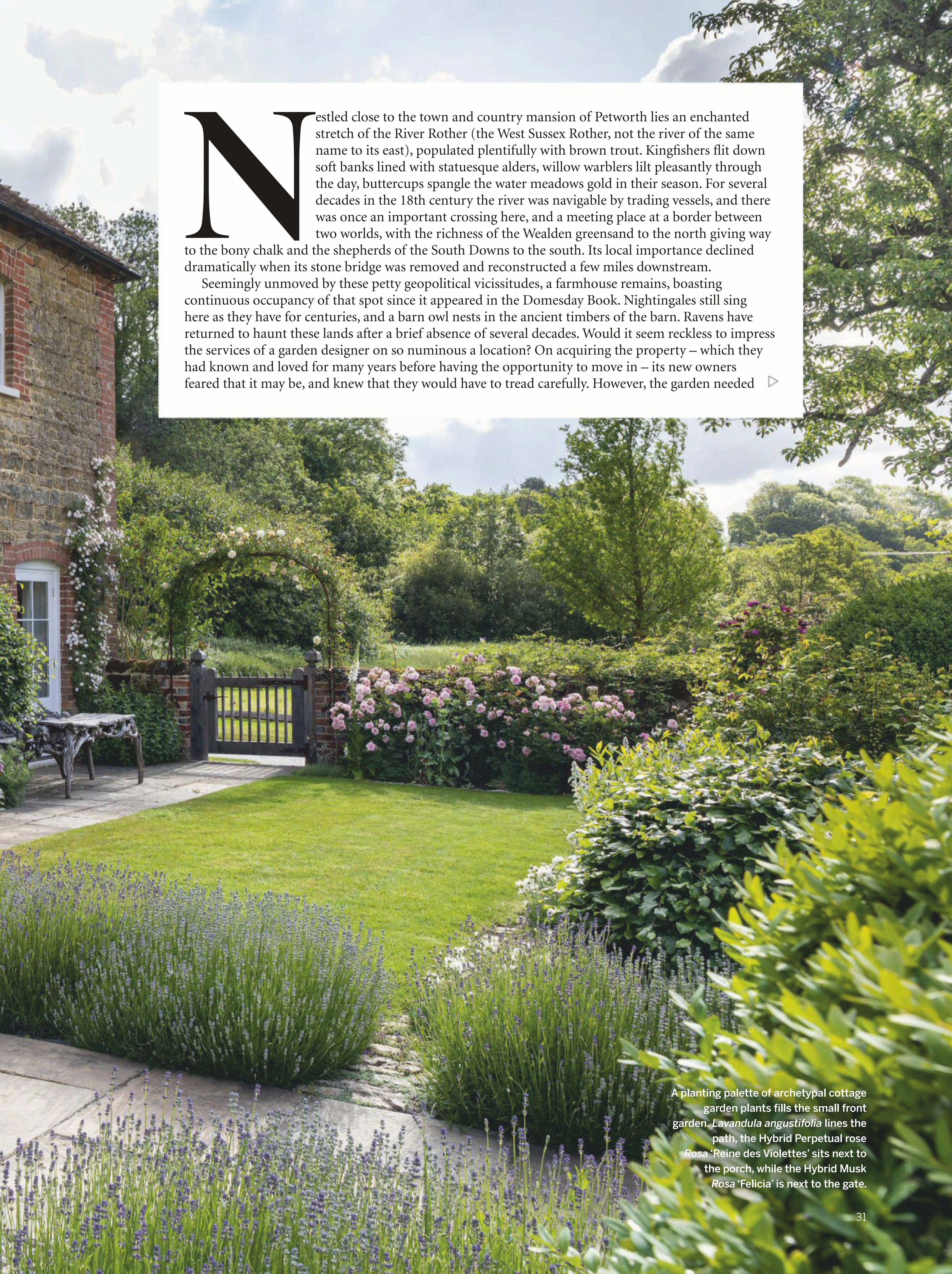
What A cottage garden with a traditional approach to its plant palette and hard landscape.
Where West Sussex.
Soil Fertile loamy clay on greensand.
Size Three acres.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

Sunrise filters through the foliage of a pear tree, planted as part of the redesign to foster a sense of timelessness and productivity, while in the enclosed front garden roses abound, including ramblers *Rosa* 'The Garland' (on the house) and 'Gardenia' covering the entrance arch.

It was important that work be completed with the lightest of touches, so as not to jar with the existing atmosphere of the property

Nestled close to the town and country mansion of Petworth lies an enchanted stretch of the River Rother (the West Sussex Rother, not the river of the same name to its east), populated plentifully with brown trout. Kingfishers flit down soft banks lined with statuesque alders, willow warblers lilt pleasantly through the day, buttercups spangle the water meadows gold in their season. For several decades in the 18th century the river was navigable by trading vessels, and there was once an important crossing here, and a meeting place at a border between two worlds, with the richness of the Wealden greensand to the north giving way to the bony chalk and the shepherds of the South Downs to the south. Its local importance declined dramatically when its stone bridge was removed and reconstructed a few miles downstream.

Seemingly unmoved by these petty geopolitical vicissitudes, a farmhouse remains, boasting continuous occupancy of that spot since it appeared in the Domesday Book. Nightingales still sing here as they have for centuries, and a barn owl nests in the ancient timbers of the barn. Ravens have returned to haunt these lands after a brief absence of several decades. Would it seem reckless to impress the services of a garden designer on so numinous a location? On acquiring the property – which they had known and loved for many years before having the opportunity to move in – its new owners feared that it may be, and knew that they would have to tread carefully. However, the garden needed



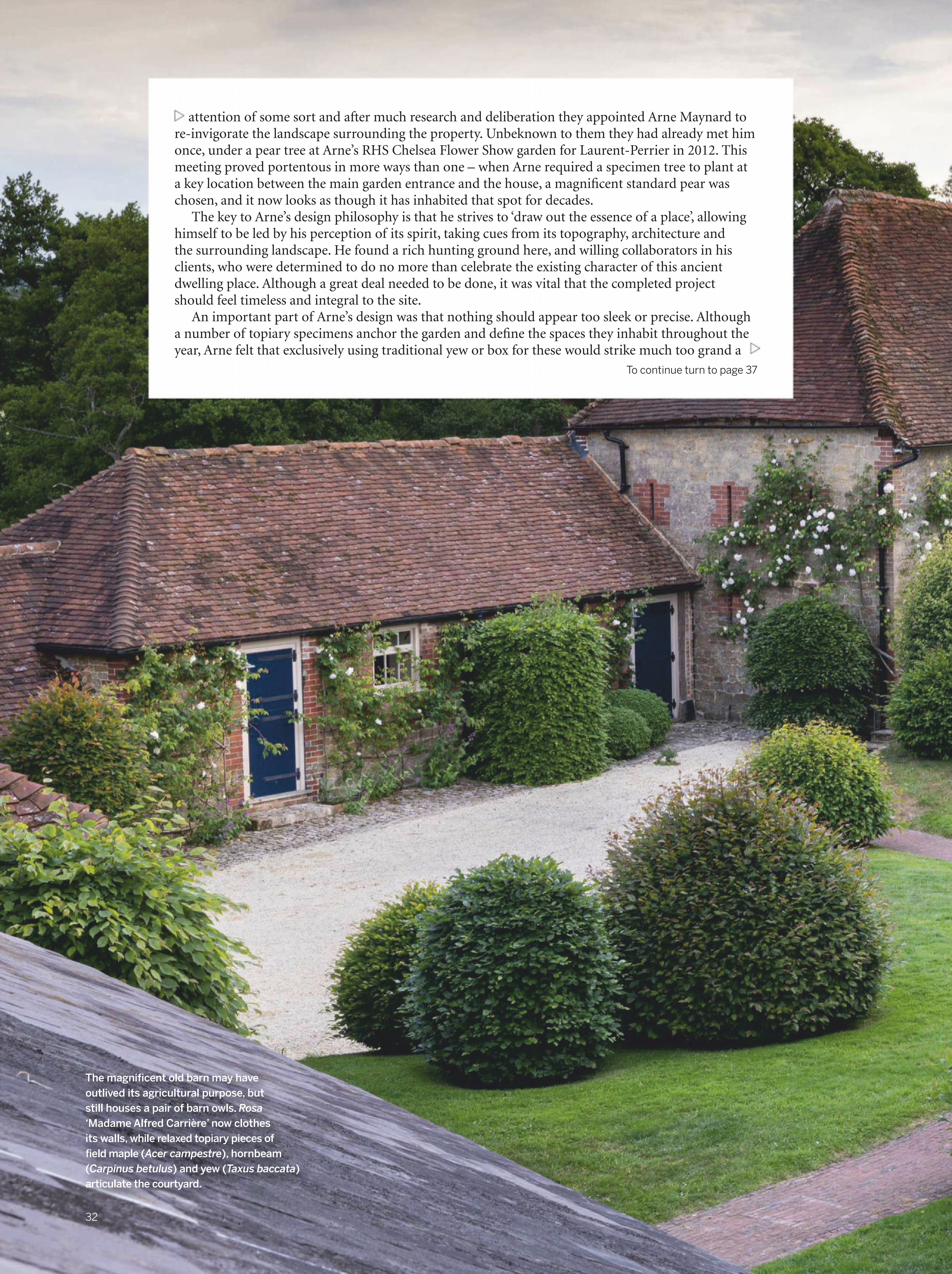
A planting palette of archetypal cottage garden plants fills the small front garden. *Lavandula angustifolia* lines the path, the Hybrid Perpetual rose *Rosa* 'Reine des Violettes' sits next to the porch, while the Hybrid Musk *Rosa* 'Felicia' is next to the gate.

▷ attention of some sort and after much research and deliberation they appointed Arne Maynard to re-invigorate the landscape surrounding the property. Unbeknown to them they had already met him once, under a pear tree at Arne's RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden for Laurent-Perrier in 2012. This meeting proved portentous in more ways than one – when Arne required a specimen tree to plant at a key location between the main garden entrance and the house, a magnificent standard pear was chosen, and it now looks as though it has inhabited that spot for decades.

The key to Arne's design philosophy is that he strives to 'draw out the essence of a place', allowing himself to be led by his perception of its spirit, taking cues from its topography, architecture and the surrounding landscape. He found a rich hunting ground here, and willing collaborators in his clients, who were determined to do no more than celebrate the existing character of this ancient dwelling place. Although a great deal needed to be done, it was vital that the completed project should feel timeless and integral to the site.

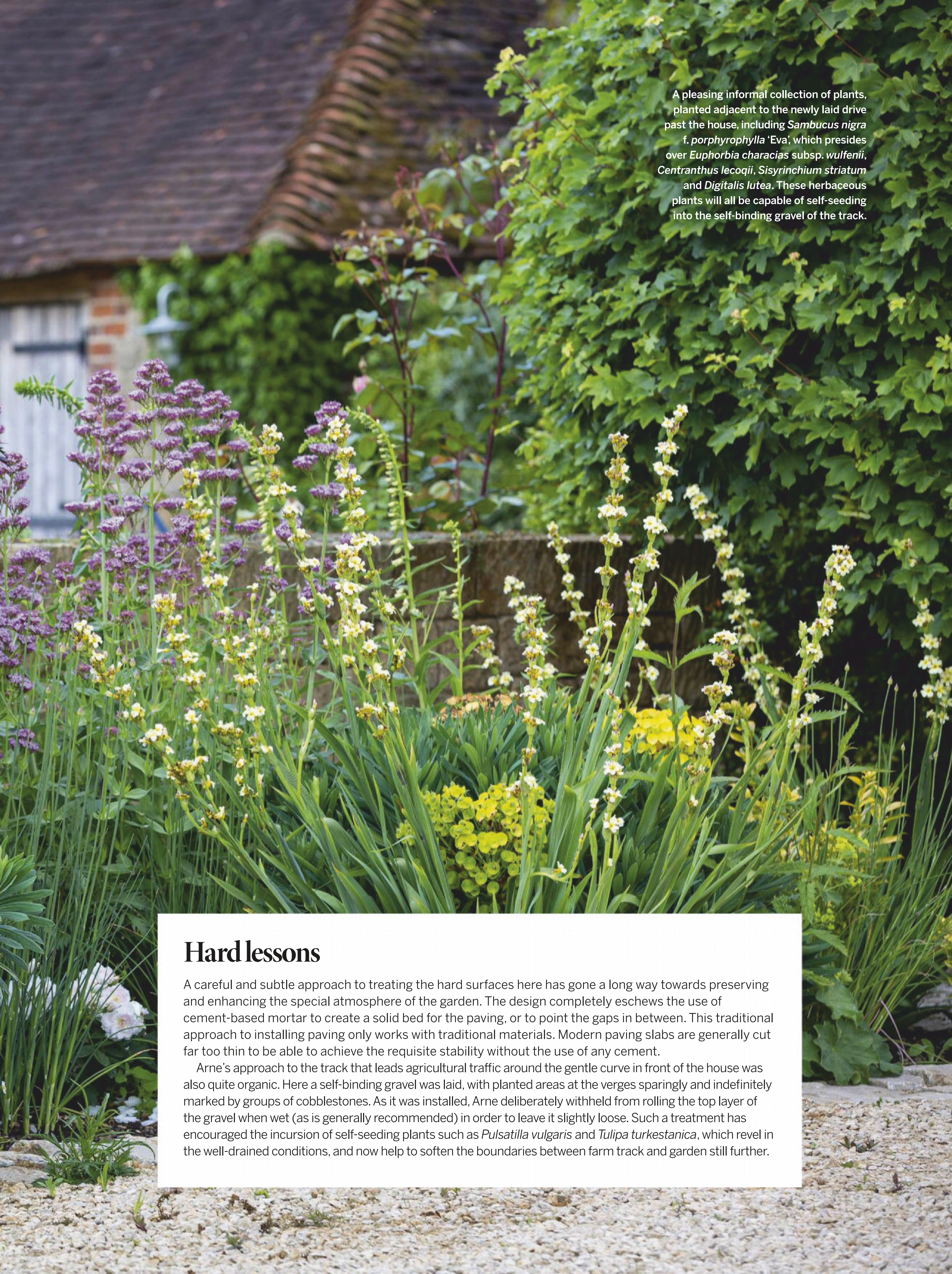
An important part of Arne's design was that nothing should appear too sleek or precise. Although a number of topiary specimens anchor the garden and define the spaces they inhabit throughout the year, Arne felt that exclusively using traditional yew or box for these would strike much too grand a ▷

To continue turn to page 37



The magnificent old barn may have outlived its agricultural purpose, but still houses a pair of barn owls. *Rosa* 'Madame Alfred Carrière' now clothes its walls, while relaxed topiary pieces of field maple (*Acer campestre*), hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and yew (*Taxus baccata*) articulate the courtyard.

Arne found his clients were determined to do no more than celebrate the existing character of this ancient dwelling place

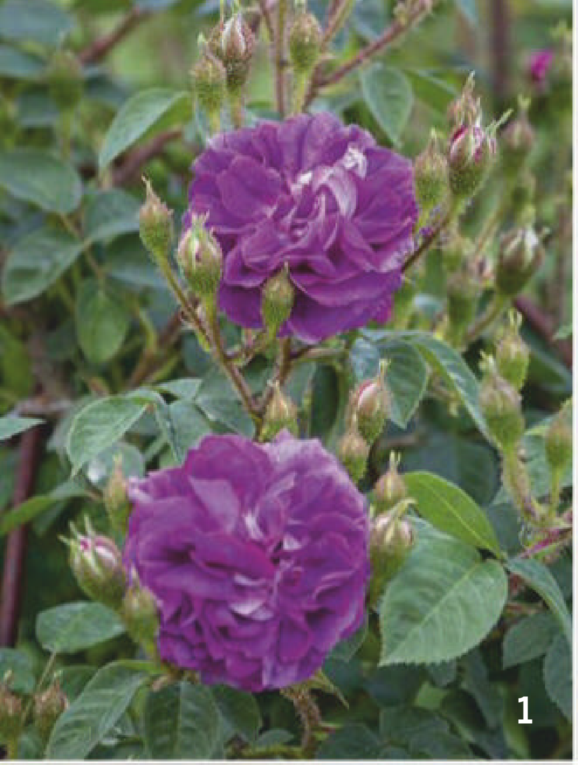


A pleasing informal collection of plants, planted adjacent to the newly laid drive past the house, including *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Eva', which presides over *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*, *Centranthus lecoqii*, *Sisyrinchium striatum* and *Digitalis lutea*. These herbaceous plants will all be capable of self-seeding into the self-binding gravel of the track.

Hard lessons

A careful and subtle approach to treating the hard surfaces here has gone a long way towards preserving and enhancing the special atmosphere of the garden. The design completely eschews the use of cement-based mortar to create a solid bed for the paving, or to point the gaps in between. This traditional approach to installing paving only works with traditional materials. Modern paving slabs are generally cut far too thin to be able to achieve the requisite stability without the use of any cement.

Arne's approach to the track that leads agricultural traffic around the gentle curve in front of the house was also quite organic. Here a self-binding gravel was laid, with planted areas at the verges sparingly and indefinitely marked by groups of cobblestones. As it was installed, Arne deliberately withheld from rolling the top layer of the gravel when wet (as is generally recommended) in order to leave it slightly loose. Such a treatment has encouraged the incursion of self-seeding plants such as *Pulsatilla vulgaris* and *Tulipa turkestanica*, which revel in the well-drained conditions, and now help to soften the boundaries between farm track and garden still further.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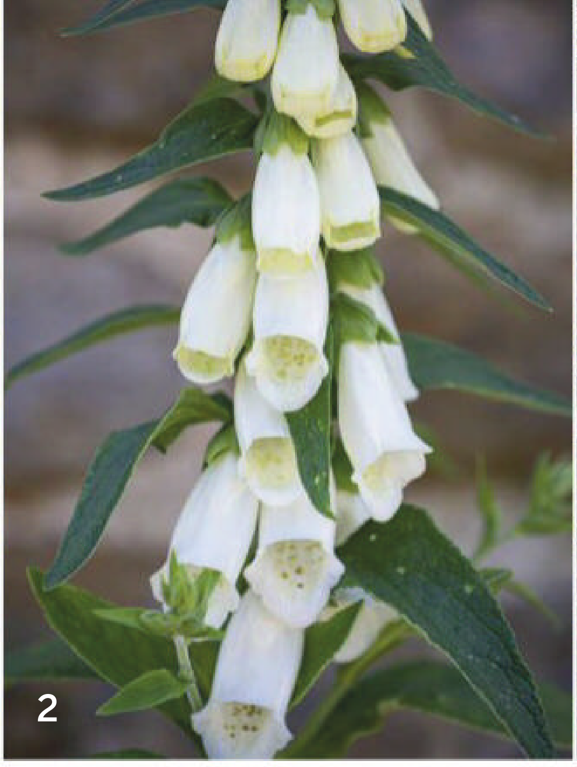
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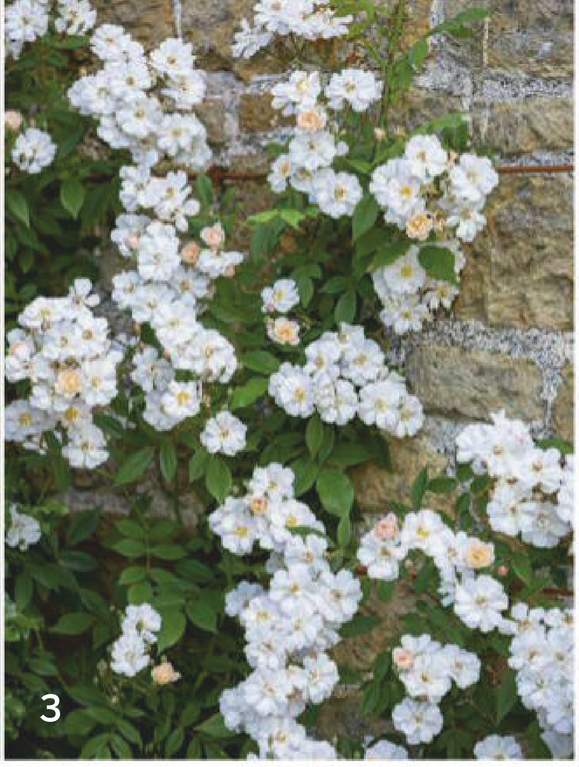
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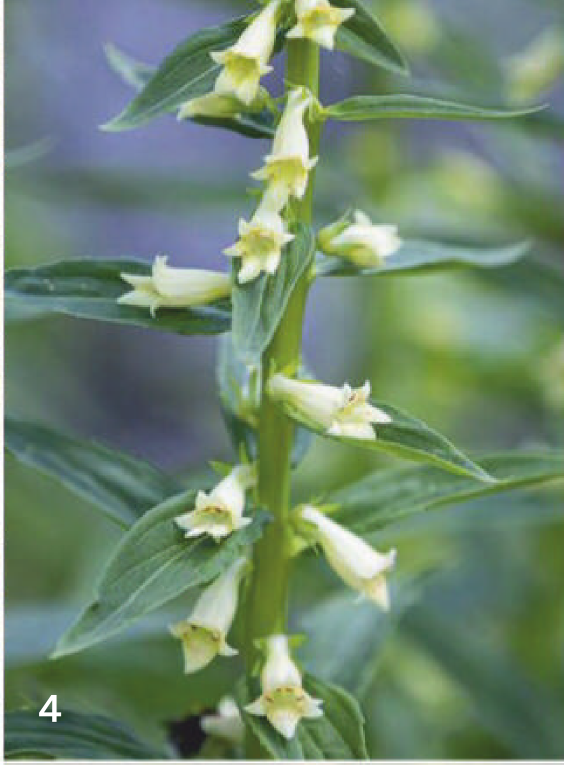
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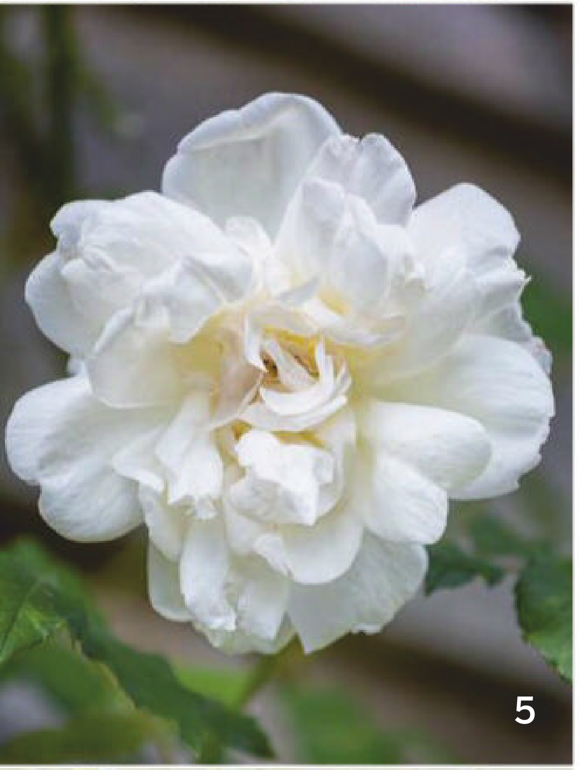
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12 KEY PLANTS

1 *Rosa* 'William Lobb'
An old 'moss' rose with lax growth that can either be grown as a shrub or a climber. Has purple-magenta blooms with a strong scent. 1.8m. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b†.

2 *Digitalis purpurea* f. *albiflora*
Classic cottage garden biennial, but very capable of reproduction by self-seeding, and any promising clumps can be moved into position in the autumn. 1.5m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

3 *Rosa* 'The Garland'
A very charming rambler with good scent, and each bloom undergoes a pleasing evolution in its colouring from bud to maturity. 4.5m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

4 *Digitalis lutea*
A perennial foxglove, but as with other *Digitalis*, it is generally very short-lived. However, also in common with others of its tribe, it will self-seed abundantly. 1m. AGM. RHS H6.

5 *Rosa* 'Madame Alfred Carrière'
A stalwart climber bred in the late 19th century and much appreciated for its willingness to flower over a long period even on a north-facing wall. 7.5m. RHS H5.

6 *Rosa* Snow Goose (= 'Auspom')
A David Austin-bred English Rambler – a group of roses that have the profuse, graceful habit of traditional ramblers but will also repeat-flower. 2.5m.

7 *Rosa* 'Mannington Mauve Rambler'
A rambler that arose as a seedling of 'The Garland' at Mannington Hall in Norfolk. Double flowers in shades of mauve that are pleasingly various. 4.5m.

8 *Rosa* 'Felicia'
One of the Hybrid Musks that are characterised by an abundance of graceful growth and repeat flowering. Strongly scented. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

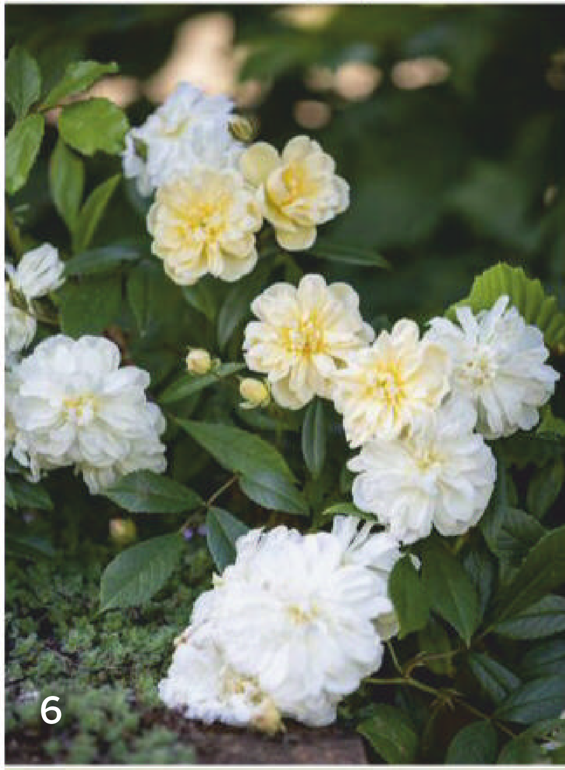
9 *Rosa* 'Narrow Water'
A repeat-flowering rambler of restricted vigour, but impressively floriferous, producing trusses of up to 40 flowers each. 2.4m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

10 *Rosa* 'Gardenia'
A quite vigorous once-flowering rambler. Its loose agglomeration of numerous petals brings to mind the houseplant *Gardenia jasminoides*, as does its strong fragrance. 7.5m.

11 *Delphinium* Astolat Group
Delphiniums tend to evoke a strong sense of nostalgia, as they are no longer as frequently planted as they once were. They require staking and a rich diet. 1.8m.

12 *Rosa* 'Cooperi'
The Cooper's Burmese rose is a very glamorous-looking rose thanks to its large single flowers and its glossy foliage. It is slightly tender. 4.5m. RHS H4.

***Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.**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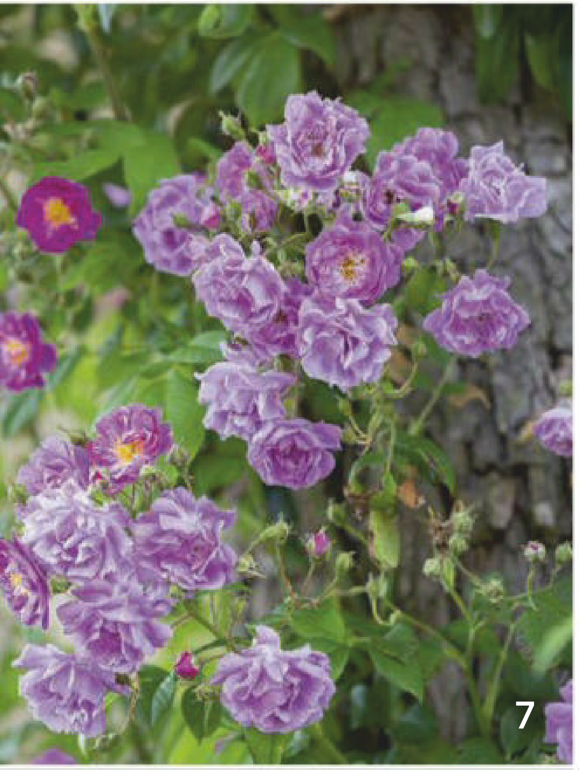
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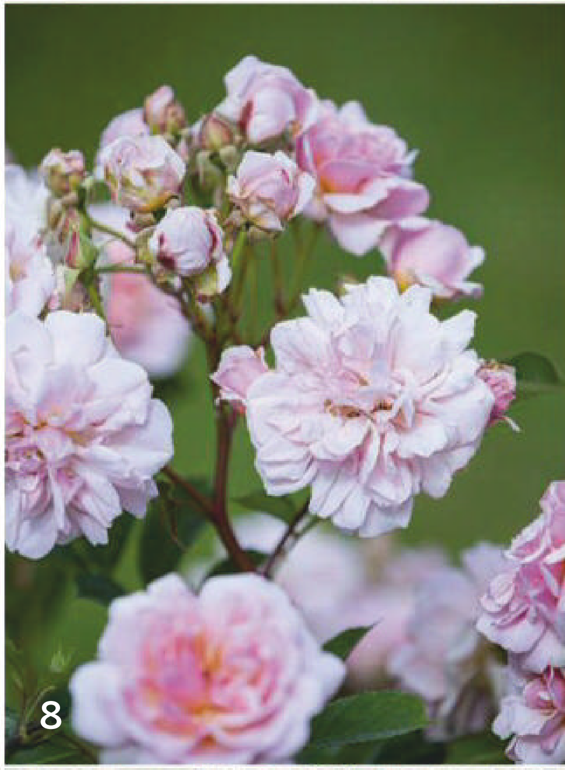
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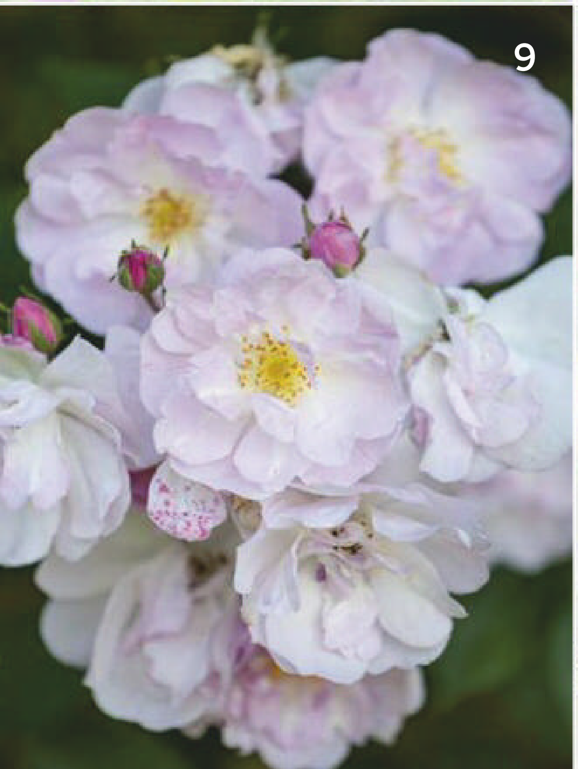
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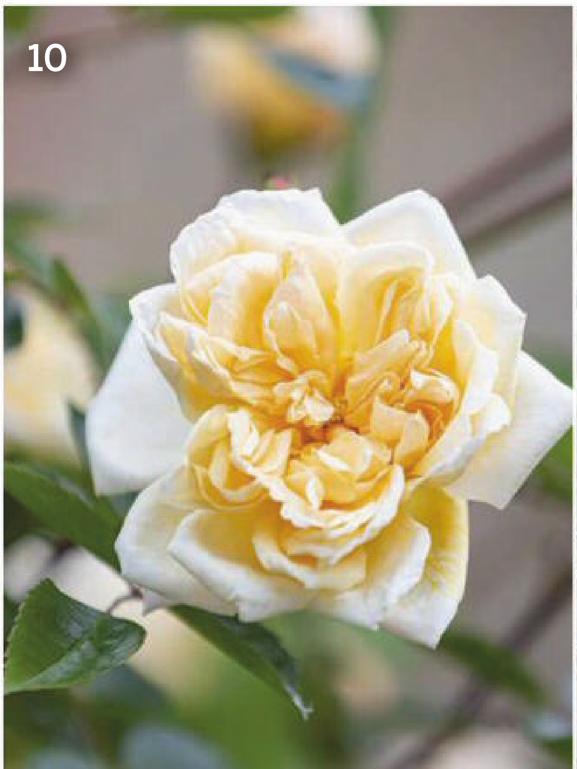
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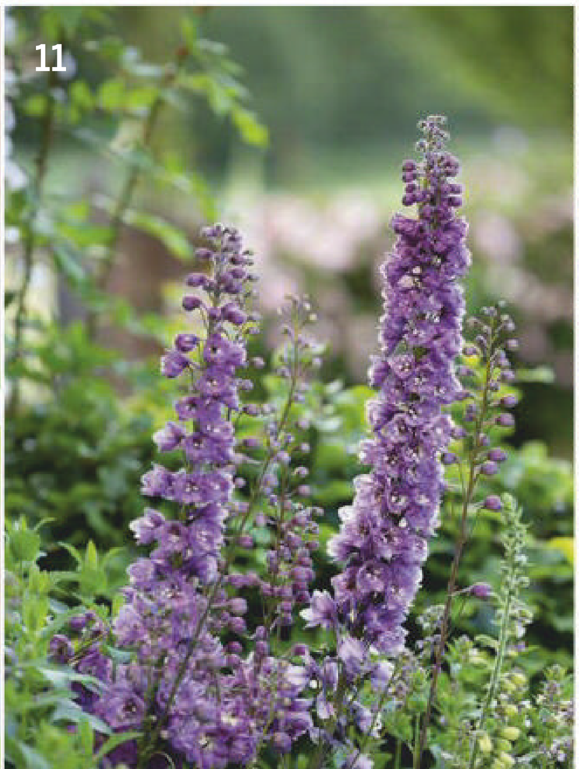
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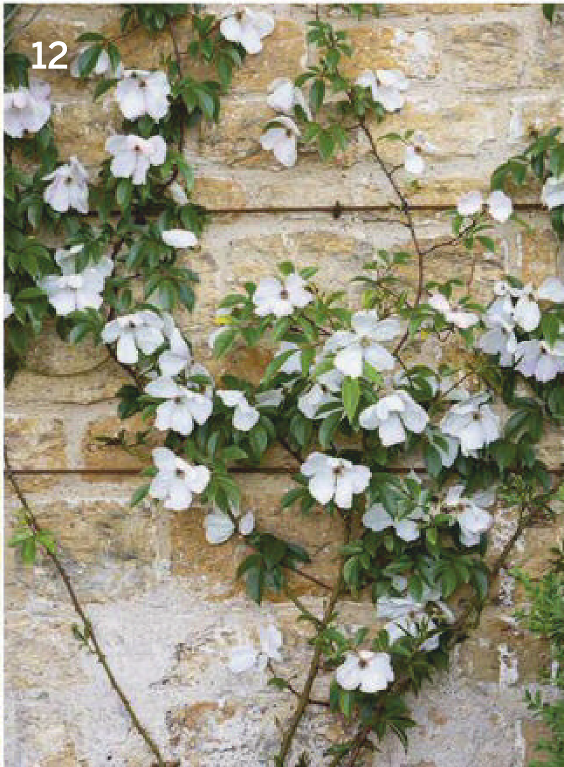
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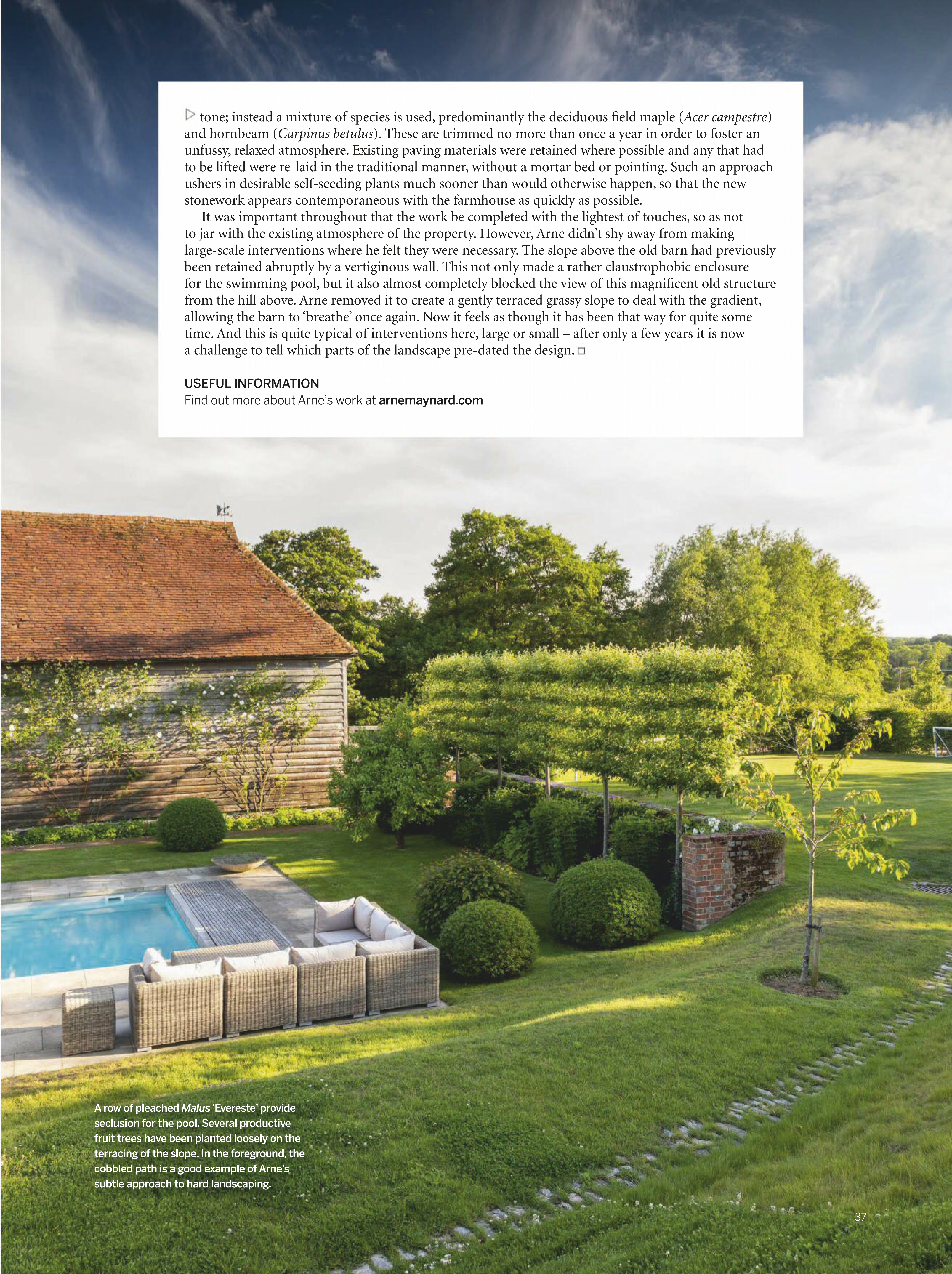
▷ tone; instead a mixture of species is used, predominantly the deciduous field maple (*Acer campestre*) and hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*). These are trimmed no more than once a year in order to foster an unfussy, relaxed atmosphere. Existing paving materials were retained where possible and any that had to be lifted were re-laid in the traditional manner, without a mortar bed or pointing. Such an approach ushers in desirable self-seeding plants much sooner than would otherwise happen, so that the new stonework appears contemporaneous with the farmhouse as quickly as possible.

It was important throughout that the work be completed with the lightest of touches, so as not to jar with the existing atmosphere of the property. However, Arne didn't shy away from making large-scale interventions where he felt they were necessary. The slope above the old barn had previously been retained abruptly by a vertiginous wall. This not only made a rather claustrophobic enclosure for the swimming pool, but it also almost completely blocked the view of this magnificent old structure from the hill above. Arne removed it to create a gently terraced grassy slope to deal with the gradient, allowing the barn to 'breathe' once again. Now it feels as though it has been that way for quite some time. And this is quite typical of interventions here, large or small – after only a few years it is now a challenge to tell which parts of the landscape pre-dated the design. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Arne's work at **arnemaynard.com**

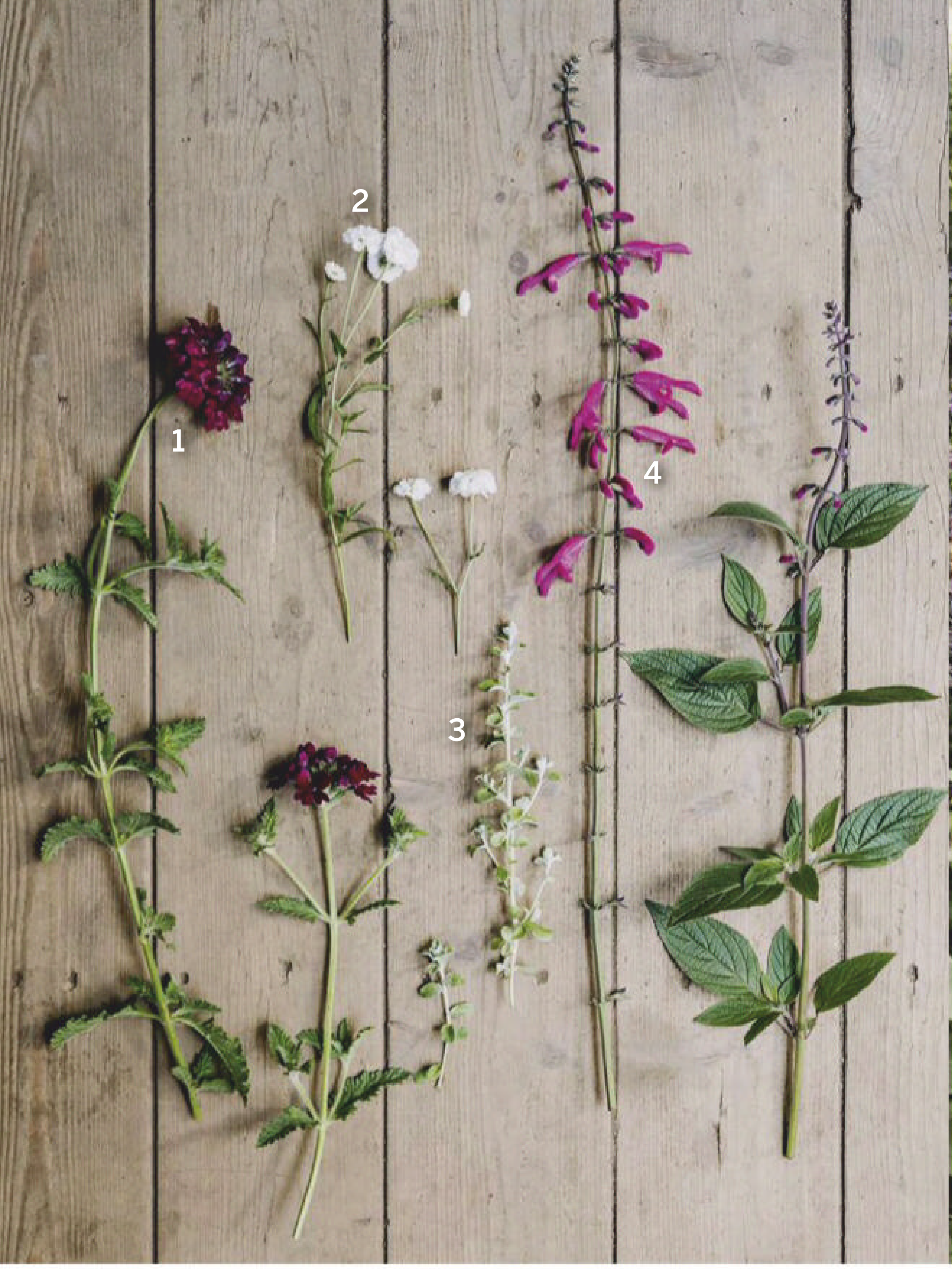


A row of pleached *Malus* 'Evereste' provide seclusion for the pool. Several productive fruit trees have been planted loosely on the terracing of the slope. In the foreground, the cobbled path is a good example of Arne's subtle approach to hard landscaping.

His dark materials

York Gate's head gardener Ben Preston creates three dark and sultry container displays for high summer using a mix of unusual plants, from half-hardy succulents to sun-loving carnivorous plants

WORDS **BEN PRESTON** PHOTOGRAPHS **EVA NEMETH**



ISTRIAN FONT

Bold, permanent planters can make proud statements in even the smallest gardens. This ancient, carved stone wellhead, reminiscent of many found in Italian towns, provides continental grandeur. At York Gate it's placed on an axis between garden rooms and a main vista, and provides both impact and purpose. Loose and twinning tender perennials spill from the font as the season progresses, with the elegant pink *Salvia curviflora*, sitting at its centre, flowering all summer long.

How to achieve the look

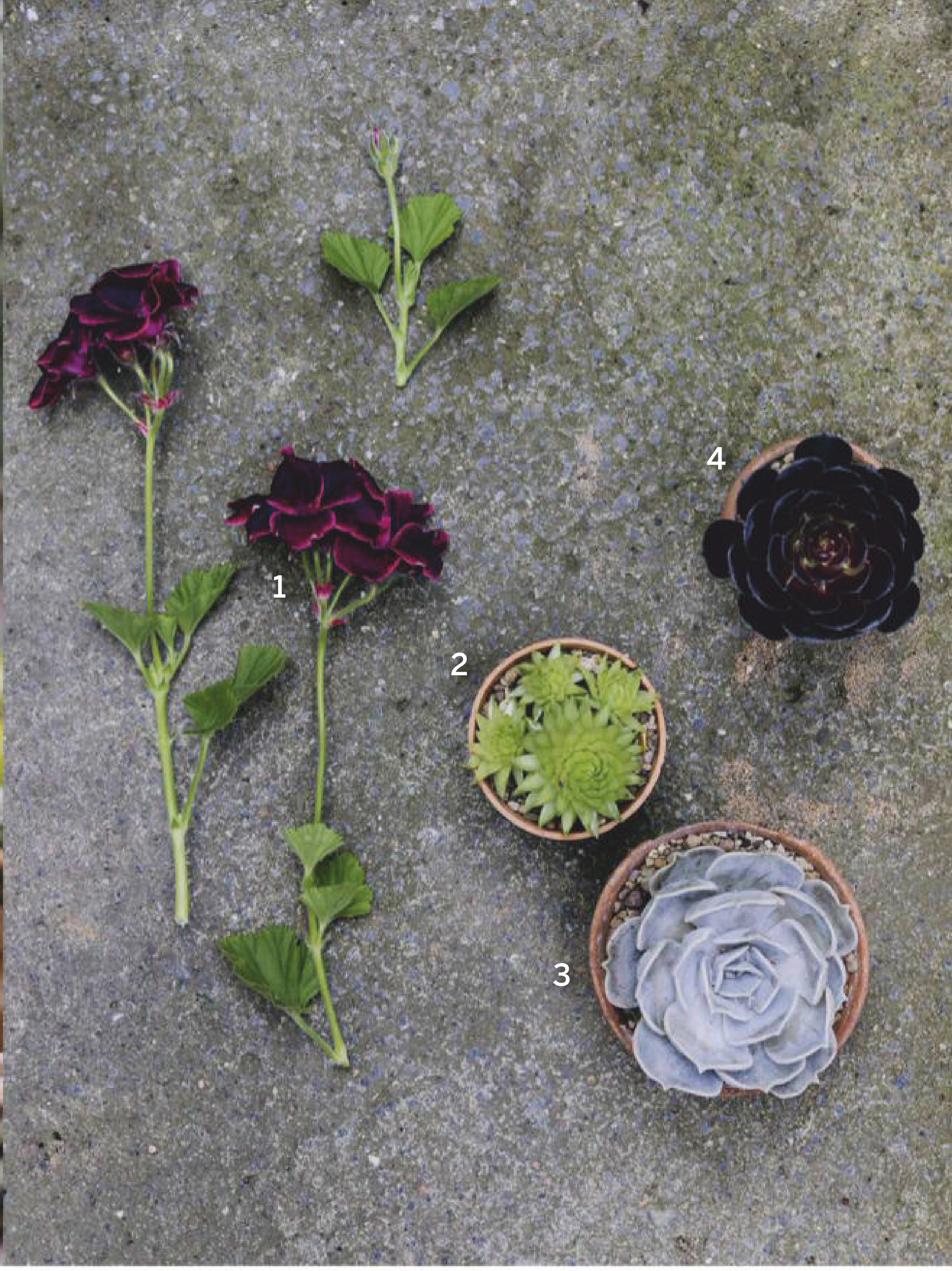
Container and composition
Permanent structures, such as this wellhead, can add to a garden's strong backbone. While large, heavy ornate pieces are getting harder to come by, some very good replicas in stone, resin and concrete are available and far less expensive. The vervain produces endless dark-red pincushions that twist happily with the common but useful silver foliage of *Plecostachys serpyllifolia*. Both will spill and engulf the font, giving an informal and romantic feel. *Salvia curviflora* placed in the centre, sends out vertical stems covered in intense but pleasing pink, hooded blooms. Short, white, double *Achillea ptarmica* 'Noblessa' hides the naked legs of the salvia and ties in gracefully with the *Plecostachys*.

Cultivation and care
Tender salvias are growing in popularity and rightly so. Many cultivars are readily available in a plethora of colours from the near pure-white *Salvia* x *jamensis* 'Trebah' through to the black of *Salvia discolor*. Most flower from midsummer until the first frosts, making them perfect for use in pots. At York Gate, we overwinter just a few specimens of each of our favourite species and cultivars in a frost-free greenhouse. We then take softwood cuttings from these stock plants when fresh growth flushes from late winter through to early spring as the temperature and light levels increase. We grow many of our tender perennials in this way including glandularias, aryganthemums, diascias and salvias, taking several cuttings from just one plant.

Plants

1 *Glandularia* 'Claret' A vigorous, half-hardy vervain producing masses of velvety dark-red pincushion blooms on arching stems. 40cm. AGM*. RHS H3, USDA 5a-9b†.
2 *Achillea ptarmica* 'Noblessa' Dwarf herbaceous perennial producing button-like, double white flowers from July to September. 30cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.
3 *Plecostachys serpyllifolia* Narrow, silvery leaved, vigorous and half-hardy perennial that is grown for its foliage. 30cm. RHS H3.
4 *Salvia curviflora* Attractive salvia with tall, erect flowering stems bearing intense magenta-pink hooded blooms. 1.2m. RHS H2.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



DARK MEDITERRANEAN

Prominent deep-purple rosettes held aloft on patterned stems make *Aeonium* 'Zwartkop' a must-have plant in your succulent collection. The equally dark, Victorian *Pelargonium* 'Lord Bute', with its near-black petals with vivid pink margins has been a favourite for more than a century. Together they make an intense blend for a south-facing paved garden or courtyard. The tight rosettes of sempervivums and echeverias at their feet, finish off the Mediterranean combination.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition
The heat retained by this carved, stone bowl in a south-facing corner creates the Mediterranean conditions for sun-loving succulents to thrive. A mixed carpet of *Echeveria lilacina* and *Sempervivum* 'Standard Green' will continue to push up new, tight rosettes all summer, below the rising stems and dark rich heads of *Aeonium* 'Zwartkop'. Importantly the *Aeonium* are planted at the bowl's edge, showing off the patterned markings of spent petioles on their naked stems. The equally dark, *Pelargonium* 'Lord Bute' sits towards the back and centre allowing the succulents to not be over-shadowed. Carefully topping off the bowl with horticultural grit gives the desired dry garden feel.

Cultivation and care
Sempervivum 'Green Standard' is the only hardy species in this display, so all the others require winter protection. The container can be deconstructed or if you have space brought inside before the first frosts. Originating from the Canary Islands, the *Aeonium* need to be kept at least frost-free, preferably above 5ºC in a greenhouse or light windowsill. The dark heads often fade to green in the lower light levels of winter, but don't worry they will soon return to rich purple in the warmer seasons. Succulents, whether planted in a pot or the ground, require an open, free-drainage mix, so they don't sit with wet feet and rot. I use a mix of equal parts John Innes No.3, sharp sand and horticulture grit.

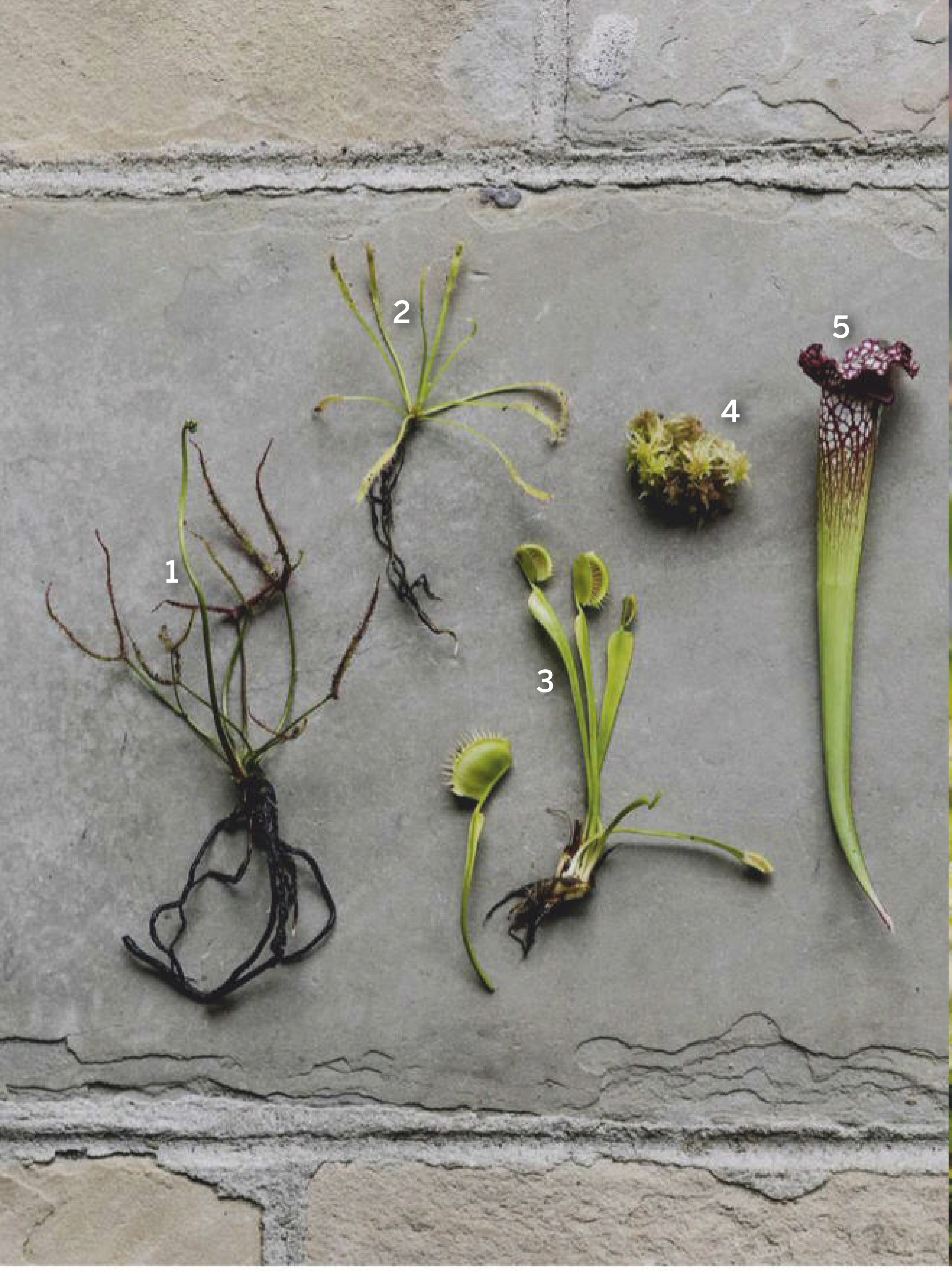
Plants

1 *Pelargonium* 'Lord Bute'
Tender, evergreen sub-shrub with deep-crimson, near-black flowers. 45cm. AGM. RHS H1C.

2 *Sempervivum* 'Green Standard'
Tight rosettes of pointed, bright-green fleshy leaves. Short erect stems of pink flowers when grown in full sun. 15cm. RHS H5.

3 *Echeveria lilacina* Tender rosette-forming succulents. Rosettes of pointed, fleshy leaves with a silvery blue hue. 15cm. AGM. RHS H2.

4 *Aeonium* 'Zwartkop' Tall evergreen succulent in neat clusters. Dark-purple open rosettes held on naked stems. Requires full sun to maintain dark foliage. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H1C.



DARWIN'S FAVOURITES

Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection was developed through his study of, and obsession with, carnivorous plants. Growing in boggy conditions with minimal nitrogen these extraordinary plants have evolved to obtain nutrients from catching insects. Although they may look tender and tropical, many are in fact hardy and make quite beautiful pot displays. Set among sphagnum moss in this vintage, cast iron stable bowl they bask in the sun, collecting flies by the front door.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition

This cast iron stable bowl, bought at a sale of vintage agricultural artefacts, is perfect for this quirky but relatively easy display. It's fixed to a sunny, south-facing wall to allow the insect-loving carnivores to grow to their full potential. Native to sunny bogs this small collection of carnivorous plants thrive in wet stagnant conditions, the near opposite to most pot displays. Planted at the back, tall, attractive pitcher plants with intense lime-green tubes topped with white hoods and beautiful purple veining stand out against the stonework. Fresh cylinders emerge from among the sphagnum moss each week. Below, a mingle of *Dionaea muscipula* and delicate droseras nestled together create a gauntlet of traps for unsuspecting insects.

Care and cultivation

To ensure the collection thrives it is important to keep the bowl saturated with rainwater(rather than tap water) so the plants don't dry out. Water straight from the tap is slightly alkaline, which will not suit these acid lovers. Carnivorous plants are often sold in garden centres, but I would consider going to a specialist nursery. Wack's Wicked Plants is a good grower local to me in Yorkshire and has a wonderful range of plants, the owners will also advise on which are hardy and suitable for growing outside all year round. All require deadheading to promote new growth and for the display to look its best, I use a pair of sharp snips to get a clean, precise cut on the succulent stems.

Plants

1 *Drosera binata* Wiry, forked red leaves covered in glandular hairs each topped with a bead of dew to catch insects. 30cm. RHS H4.

2 *Drosera capensis* 'Alba' Clump-forming, carnivorous perennial from South Africa. 35cm. AGM. RHS H3.

3 *Dionaea muscipula* Rosettes of folded leaves tipped with hinged traps. 10cm. RHS H3.

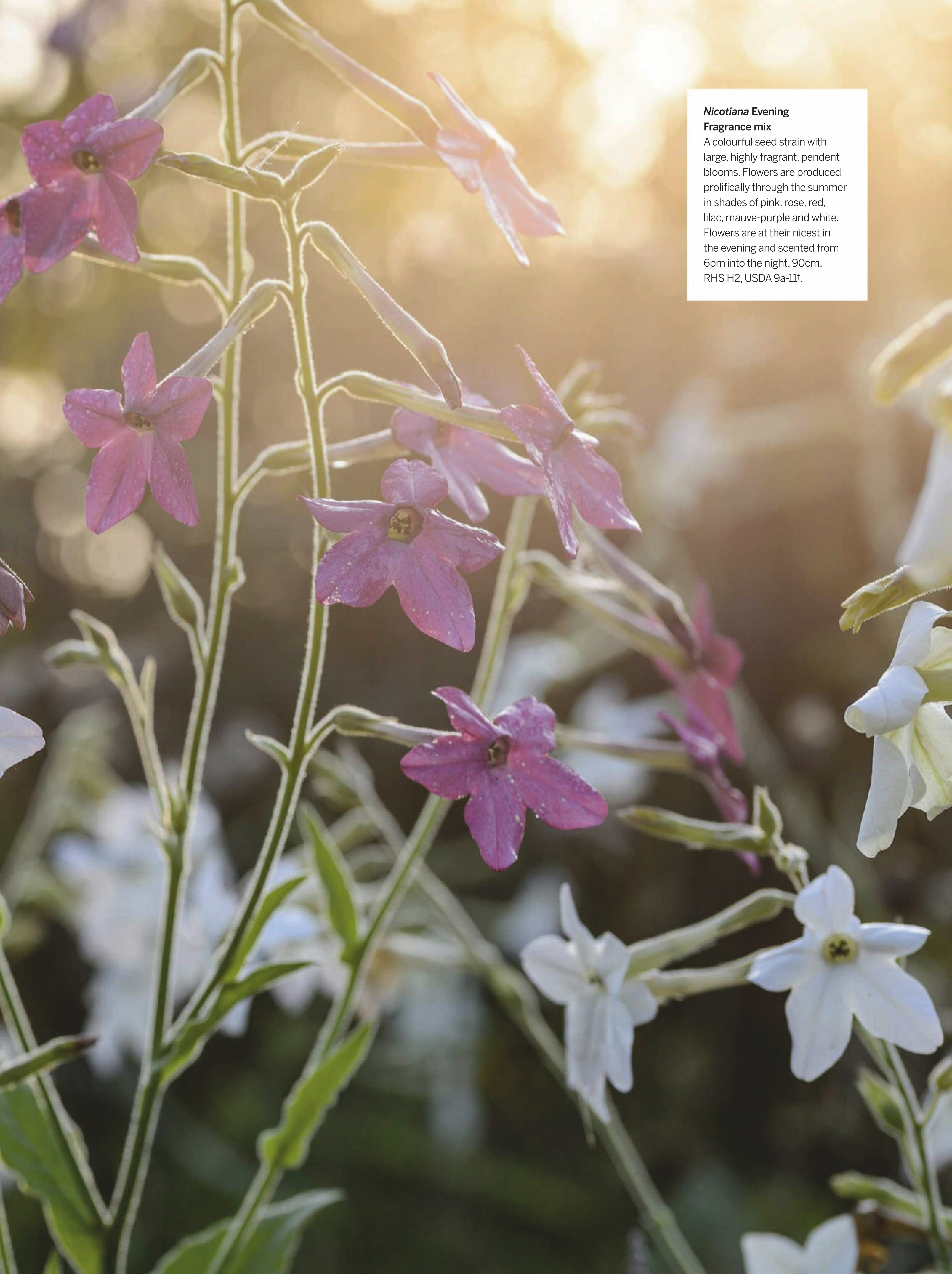
4 *Sphagnum* sp. Moss that thrives in wet bogs. Requires constant moisture and acidic soils. 15cm.

5 *Sarracenia leucophylla* hybrid Upright, tubular green pitchers that turn white towards the apex. Red-green-flowers produced in early summer. 80cm. RHS H4.

NICOTIANA

Half-hardy plants with airy flowers in dark maroon to apple green, most nicotianas also bring heady scent to summer evenings

WORDS **MATTHEW REESE** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



***Nicotiana* Evening Fragrance mix**
A colourful seed strain with large, highly fragrant, pendent blooms. Flowers are produced prolifically through the summer in shades of pink, rose, red, lilac, mauve-purple and white. Flowers are at their nicest in the evening and scented from 6pm into the night. 90cm. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11†.

The genus *Nicotiana* was named for Jean Nicot, a French diplomat who served as ambassador to Portugal between 1559 and 1561. While in Lisbon, Nicot was introduced to tobacco from South America and, convinced of its medicinal properties, presented the French queen, Catherine de Médicis, with leaves as a remedy for headaches. Her endorsement (helped possibly by a degree of addiction) meant that *l'herbe à la reine,* as tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*) was known, became so popular that the plant was cultivated in France and elsewhere in northern Europe to meet demand. Since the 16th century tobacco has become a major economic commodity, yet many nicotianas make excellent ornamental plants for the flower garden. There has been a recent surge in new cultivars entering the market, and in the UK's temperate climate, these flowering tobaccos do particularly well. They are easy to grow from seed, and once established in the garden need very little assistance. They require no deadheading, rarely need staking, and will continue to flower profusely until the frosts of winter take hold.

Ornamental tobaccos are exceptionally good for adding a deft touch of colour to the flower garden. If dahlias are to be considered among the best for extending summer exuberance into the autumn, then nicotianas should be considered one of the nicest. They have a delicate, dainty constitution that allows for more flexibility in the garden. Plants can comfortably be used to thread through the borders to add an extra layer of colour without being too dominant. Dahlias and cosmos, which are often used to prolong the flowering season, might prove too bulky or combative against their neighbours when used in this way. Planting in a self-sown, naturalistic fashion builds continuity by weaving a thread that draws the eye and pulls the border together, it helps to break up blocks of plants and creates an extra layer of interest and colour to the scene. The taller nicotianas are excellent for this, with *Nicotiana mutabilis* and *Nicotiana* Whisper mix particularly good at casting long, branching stems of translucent pink flowers above and between the border perennials – and they look particularly elegant when backlit by low sunlight. *Nicotiana langsdorffii* or *Nicotiana* 'Tinkerbell' can be used in a similar manner, but their green flowers risk being lost in a green background, so are best used near the front of the border where they can be admired.

The larger-flowered cultivars are very good for late summer bedding in mixed borders. The green-flowered cultivars, such as *Nicotiana* 'Lime Green', are excellent in combination with the clambering, magenta-flowered *Petunia integrifolia* (a close cousin of the tobaccos), or the powder-blue flowers of *Ageratum houstonianum* 'Blue Horizon'. The more sizeable *Nicotiana sylvestris* is a wonderful, stately plant that can hold its own when partnered with other large, bold plants. In the Exotic Garden, at Great Dixter, it combined well with cannas and dahlias.

One of the loveliest attributes of the genus is that many are night-scented, and therefore, particularly suited for the evening garden. *Nicotiana alata* and *Nicotiana sylvestris* are two of the best with large, white flowers that are at their best at dusk. Position them near a path or bench, somewhere sheltered so that their scents will linger long enough to be enjoyed floating on the evening air. Great Dixter's Christopher Lloyd once noted that 'the scent of *sylvestris* is creamier, less rough than *alata*'s, delicious though that is'. Both species grow well in pots and perhaps are more fully appreciated when brought indoors for the evening. Return the pots to their outdoor positions during the day to allow them a breather. One issue to note is that flowers may flag or collapse in very bright sunshine, although they remain composed in cloudier conditions. *Nicotiana alata* is quite prone to this behaviour, but it is less obvious in *Nicotiana sylvestris*. This, however, is a small price to pay as their enchanting evening perfume is well worth the compromise. ❏

• Author Matthew Reese is head gardener at Malverleys in Hampshire.
Matthew's recommendations for nicotianas continue over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

What A genus of 67 species of half-hardy annuals, perennials, and a few woody plants, all of which are poisonous. *Nicotiana tabacum* is most widely grown commercially for tobacco production, but many other species have beautiful flowers and make excellent garden plants.

Origins Native of America (mostly the tropics), Pacific Islands, Namibia and Australia.

Season Summer into autumn. May flower year-round when grown in a heated greenhouse.

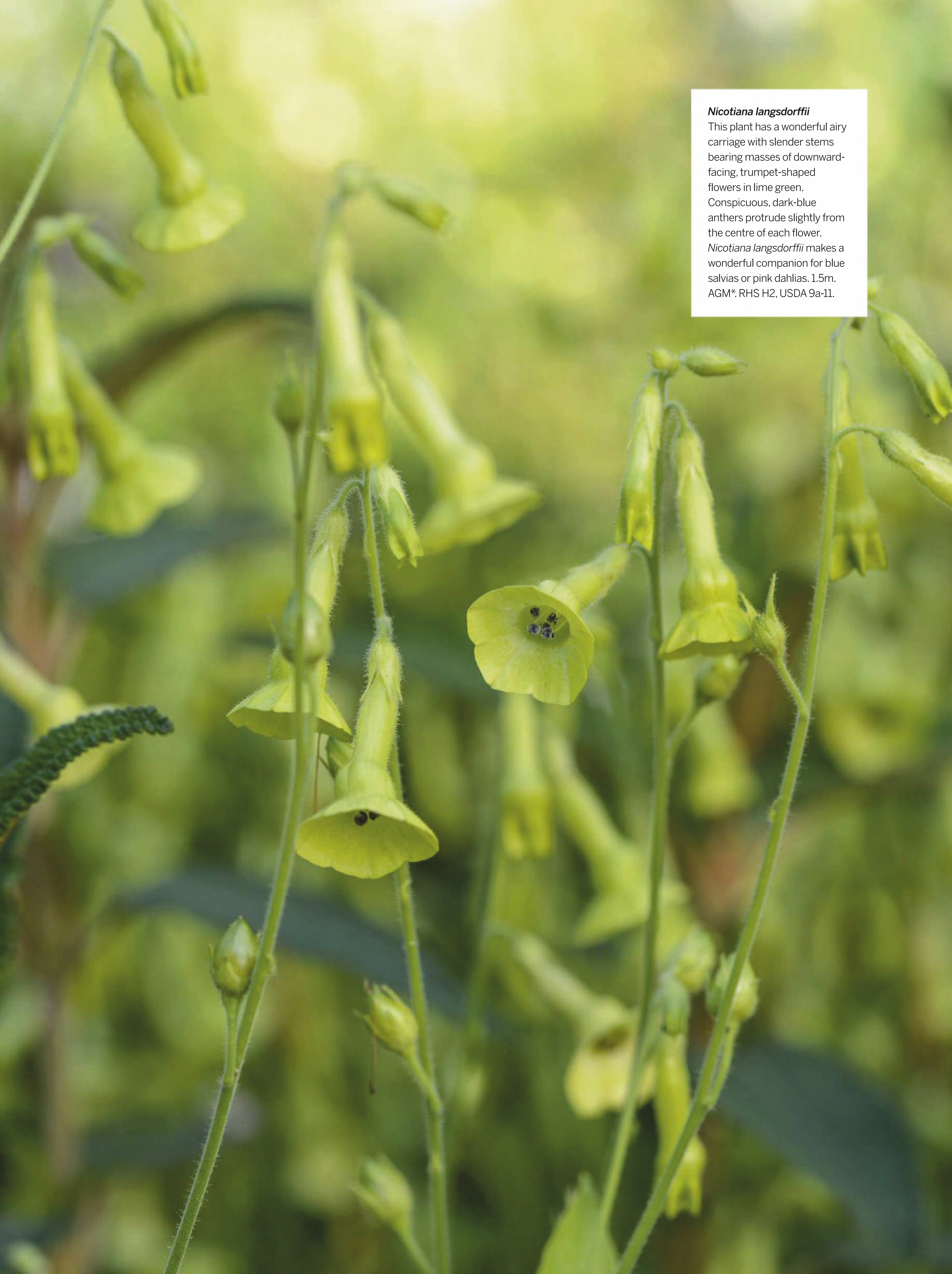
Size up to 1.5m.

Conditions Best grown as half-hardy annuals in a warm sunny position, and in moist and rich, free-draining soil.

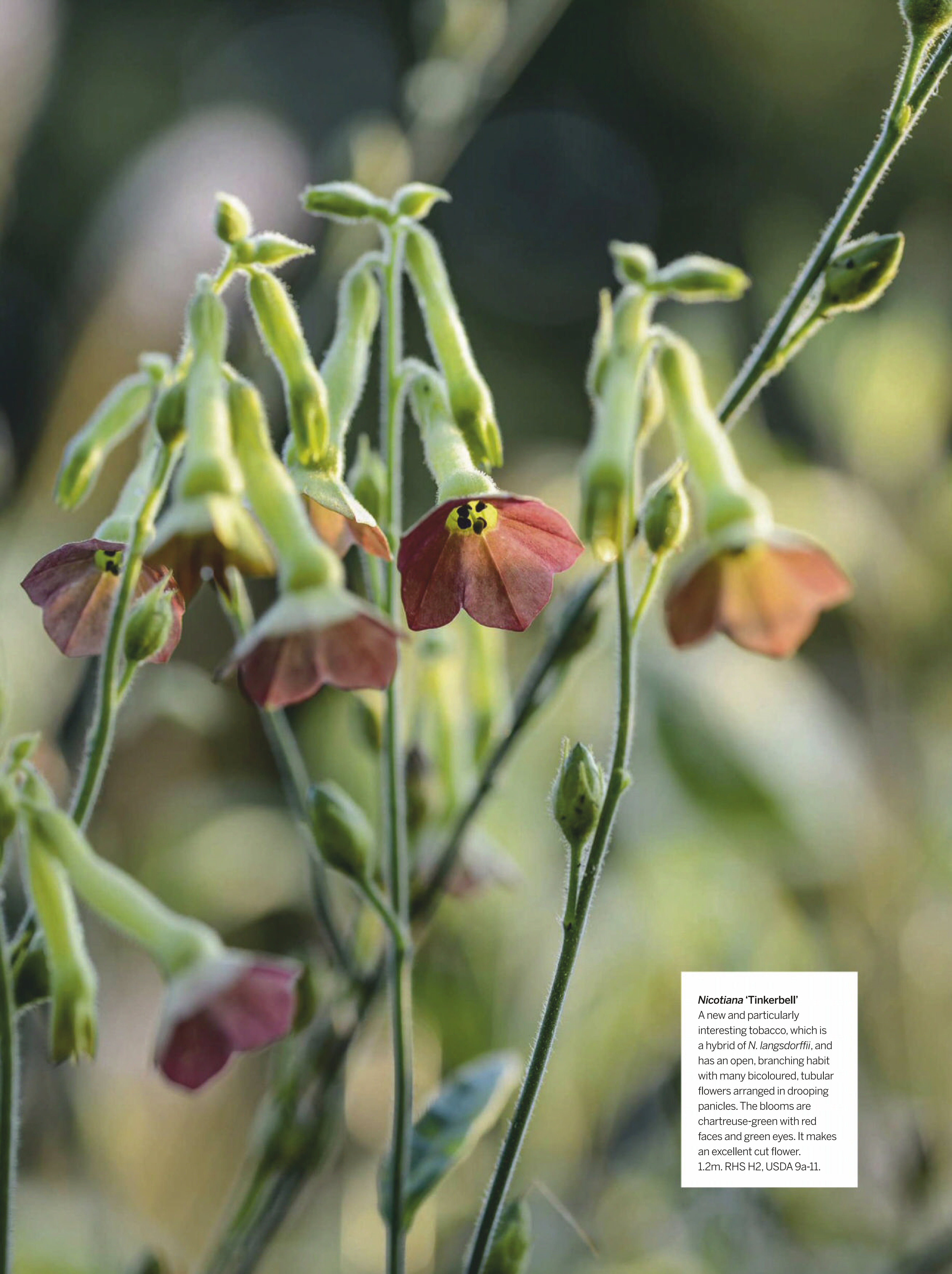
Hardiness Nicotianas are generally grown as half-hardy annuals in the UK. Most have a hardiness rating of RHS H2 and are suitable for gardens in USDA zones 9a to 11.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

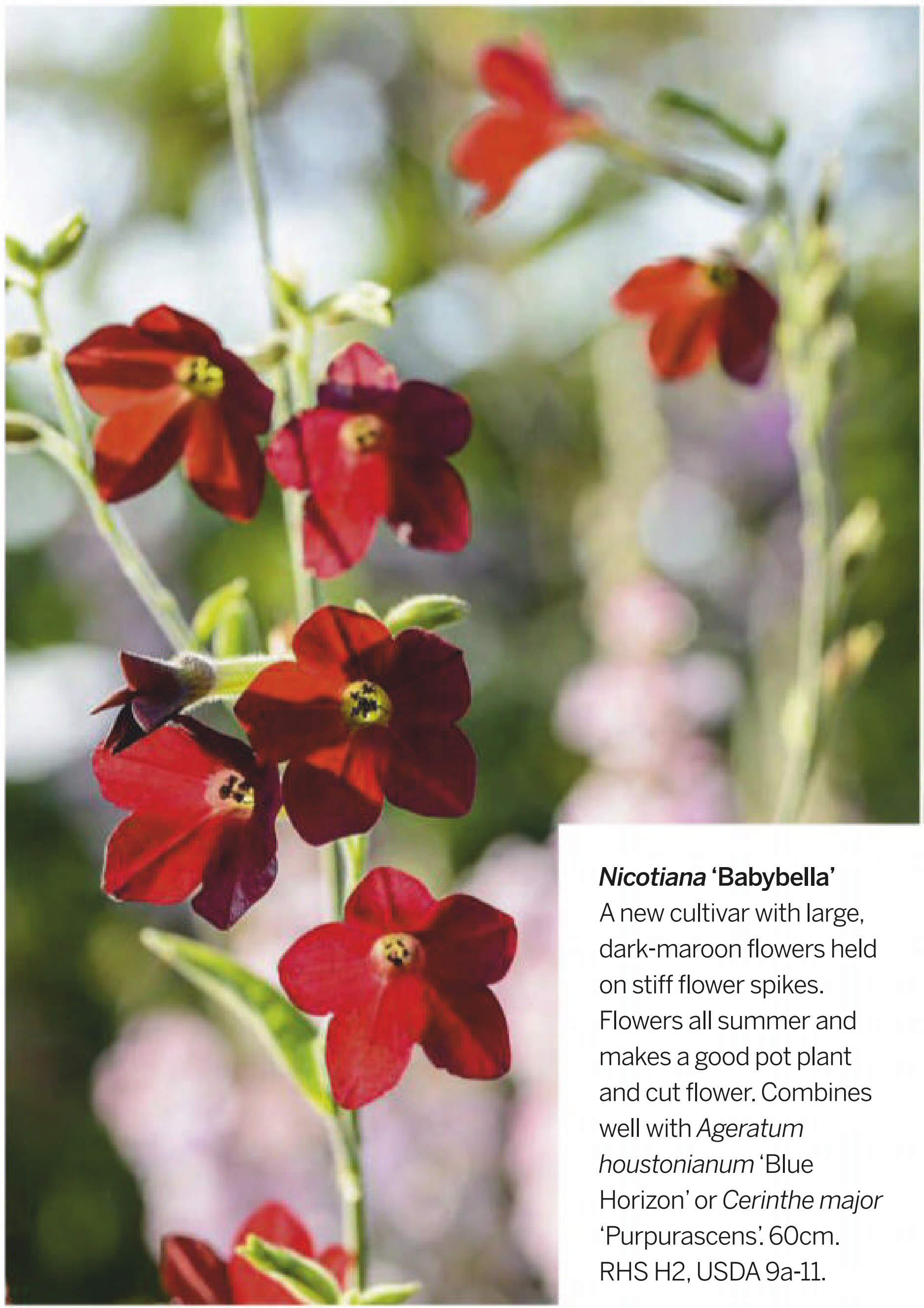
Malverleys Gardens Designed by head gardener Matthew Reese (above), Malverleys in Hampshire is one of the UK's most impressive flower gardens with abundantly planted terraces and long borders that hold a rich mix of hard-working plants, including the *Nicotiana* species and cultivars featured here. **malverleys.co.uk**



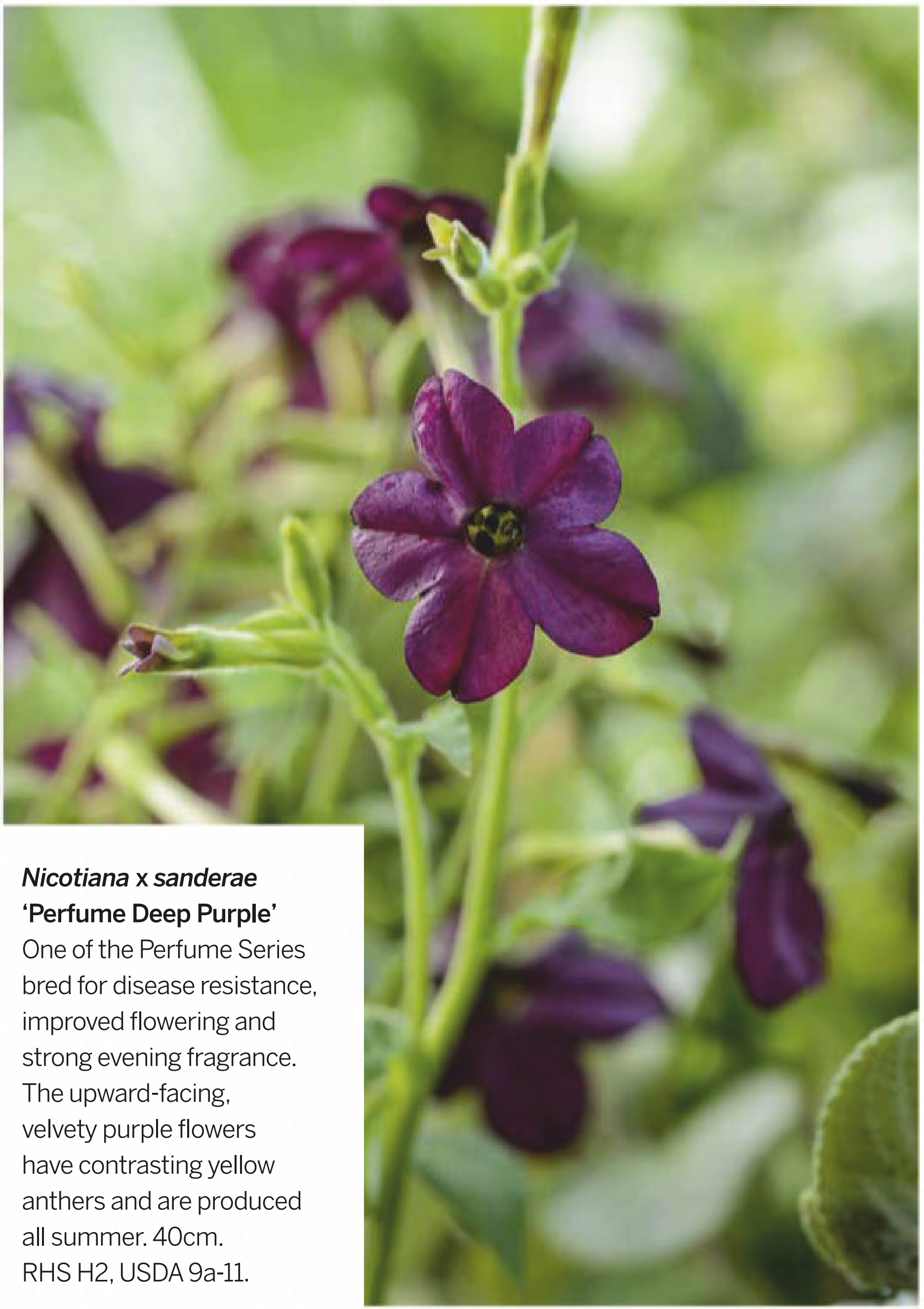
Nicotiana langsdorffii
This plant has a wonderful airy carriage with slender stems bearing masses of downward-facing, trumpet-shaped flowers in lime green. Conspicuous, dark-blue anthers protrude slightly from the centre of each flower. *Nicotiana langsdorffii* makes a wonderful companion for blue salvias or pink dahlias. 1.5m. AGM*. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.



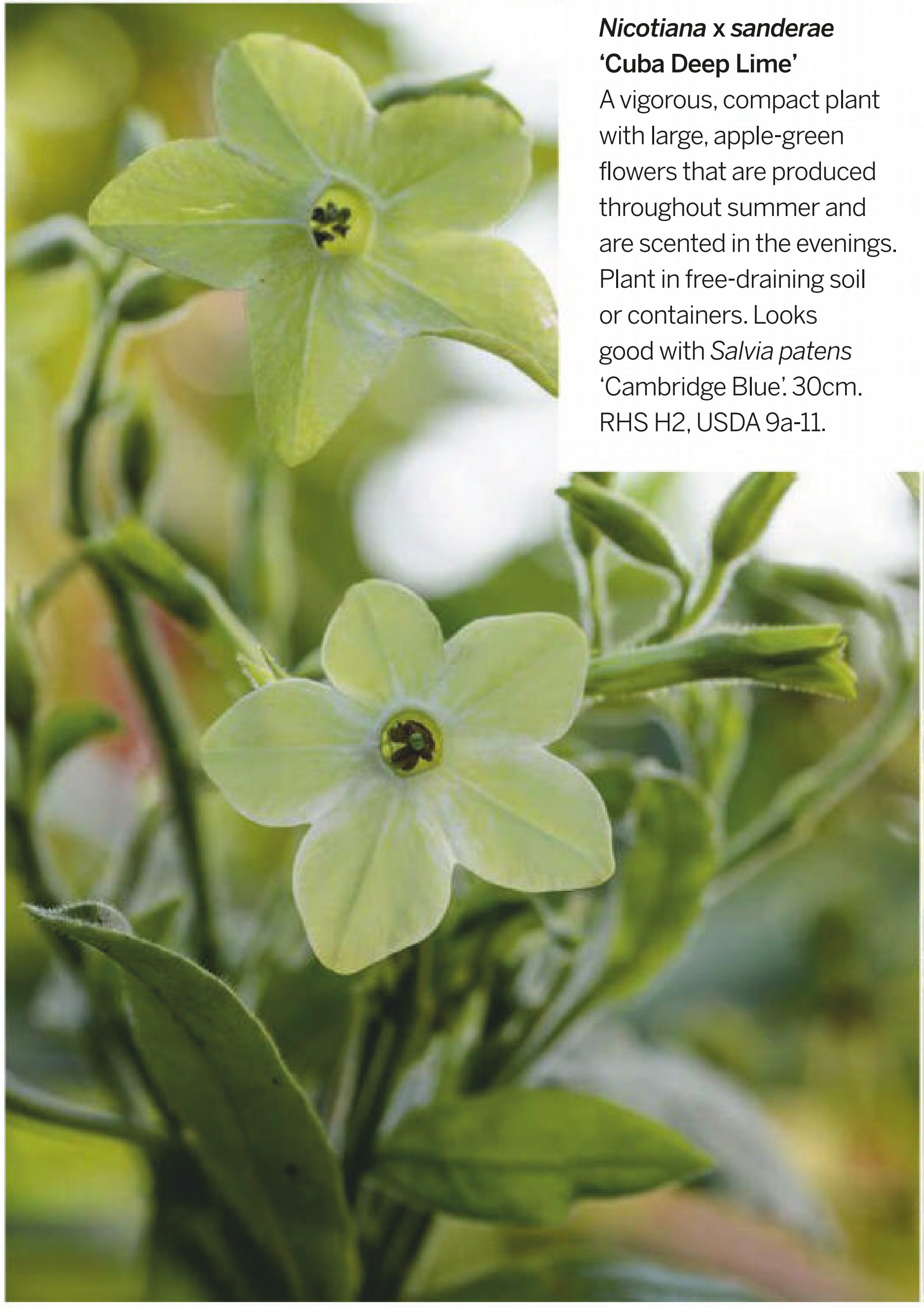
***Nicotiana* 'Tinkerbell'**
A new and particularly interesting tobacco, which is a hybrid of *N. langsdorffii*, and has an open, branching habit with many bicoloured, tubular flowers arranged in drooping panicles. The blooms are chartreuse-green with red faces and green eyes. It makes an excellent cut flower.
1.2m. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.



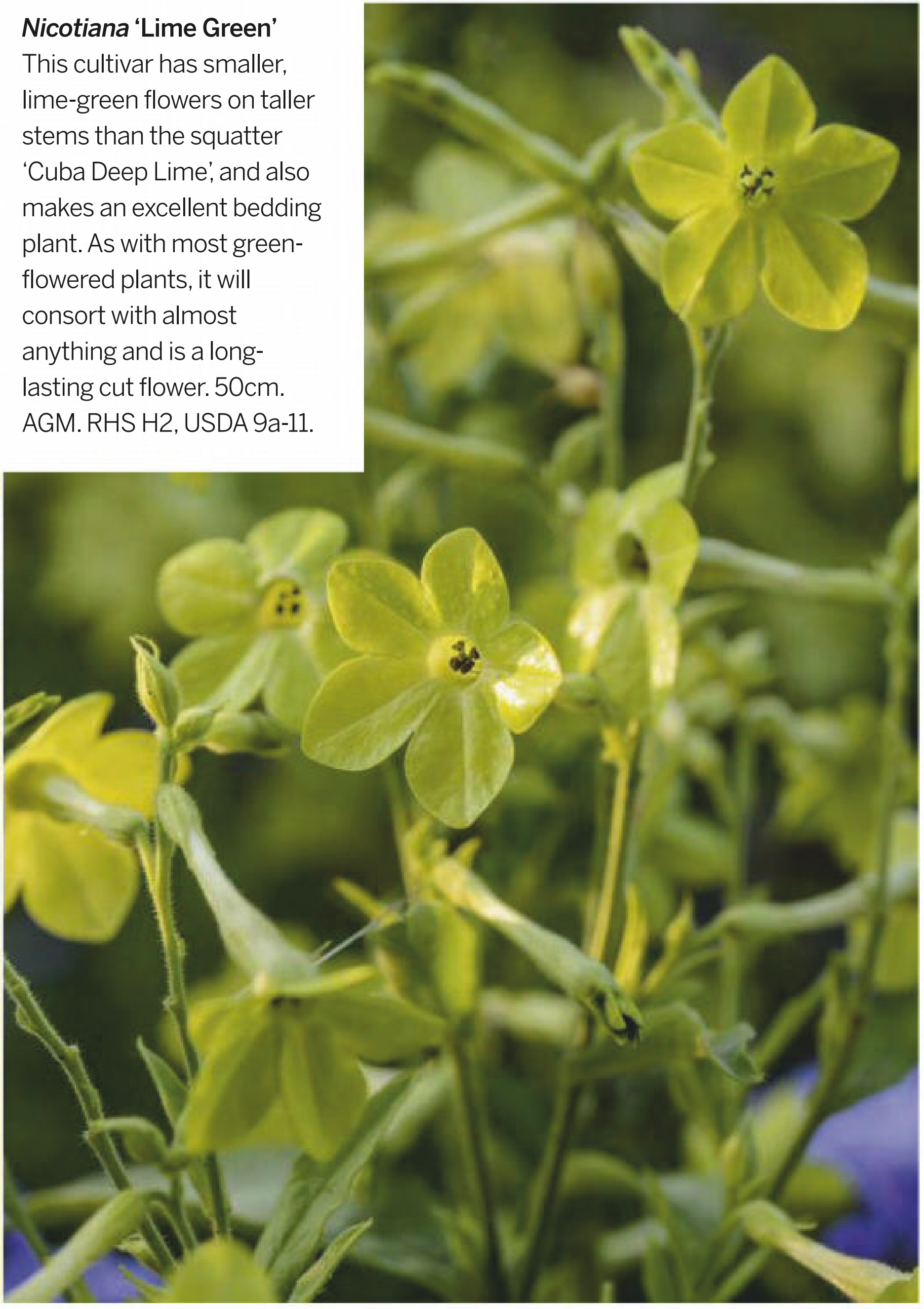
***Nicotiana* 'Babybella'**
A new cultivar with large, dark-maroon flowers held on stiff flower spikes. Flowers all summer and makes a good pot plant and cut flower. Combines well with *Ageratum houstonianum* 'Blue Horizon' or *Cerinthe major* 'Purpurascens'. 60cm. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.



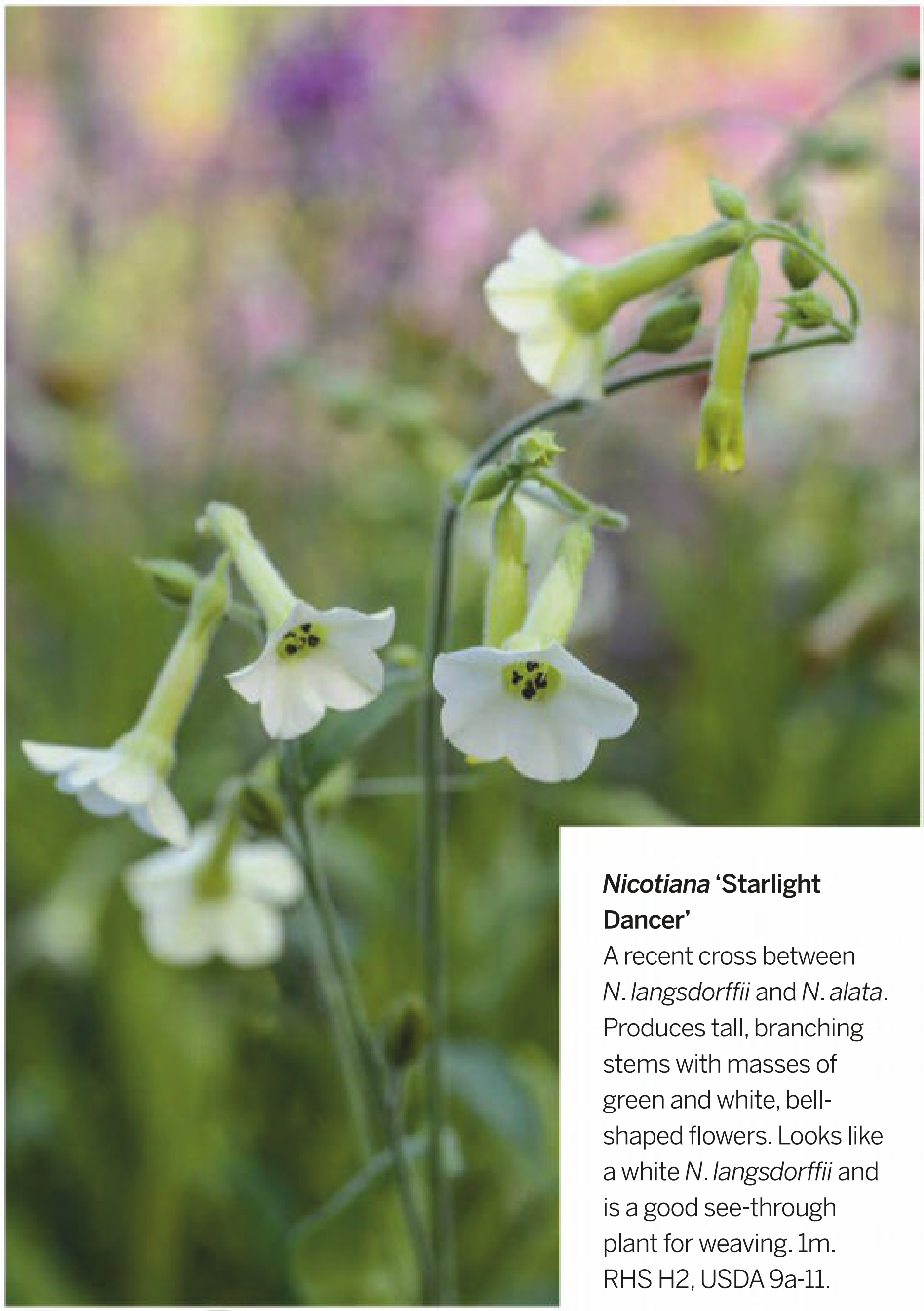
***Nicotiana* x *sanderae* 'Perfume Deep Purple'**
One of the Perfume Series bred for disease resistance, improved flowering and strong evening fragrance. The upward-facing, velvety purple flowers have contrasting yellow anthers and are produced all summer. 40cm. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.



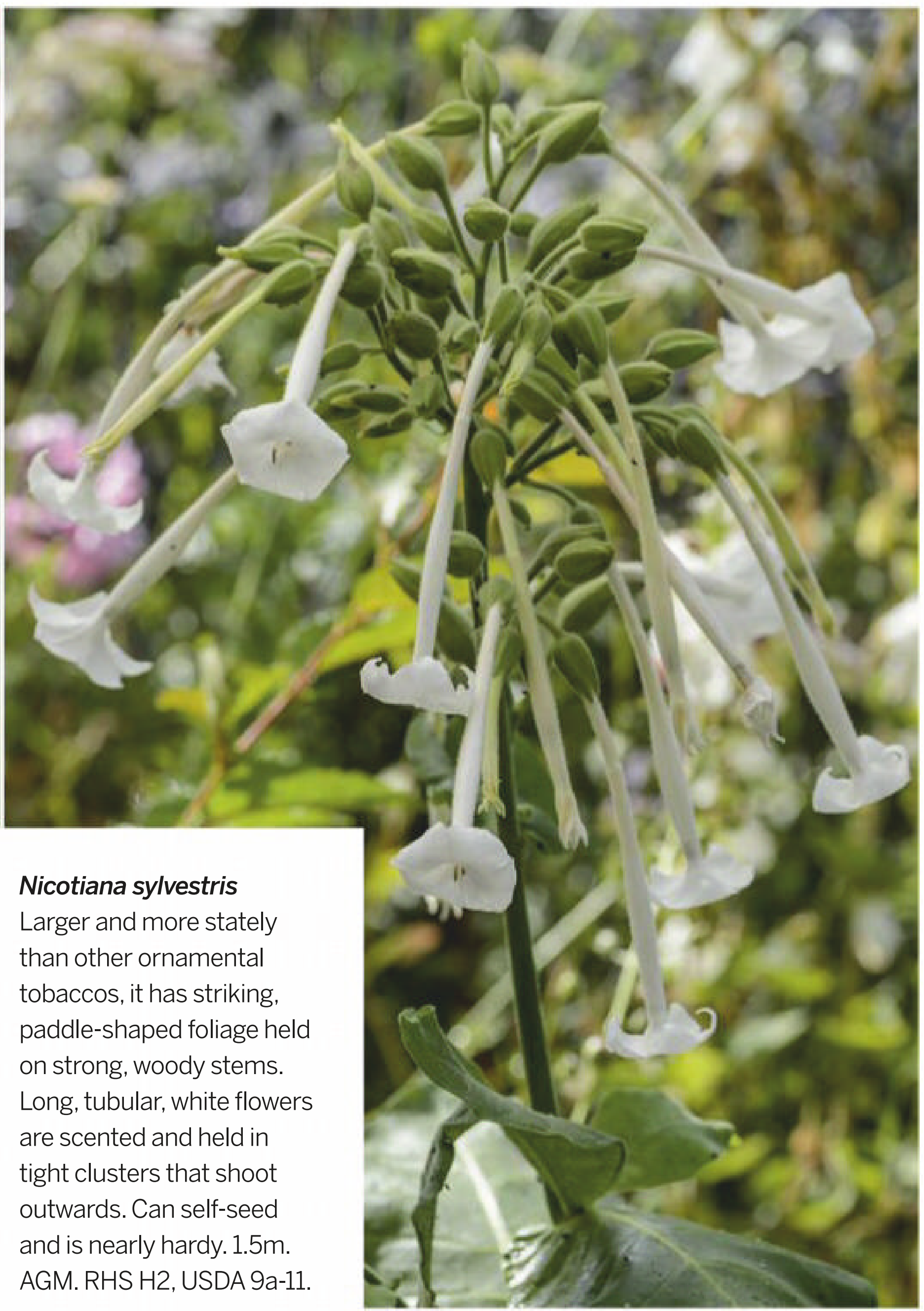
***Nicotiana* x *sanderae* 'Cuba Deep Lime'**
A vigorous, compact plant with large, apple-green flowers that are produced throughout summer and are scented in the evenings. Plant in free-draining soil or containers. Looks good with *Salvia patens* 'Cambridge Blue'. 30cm. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.



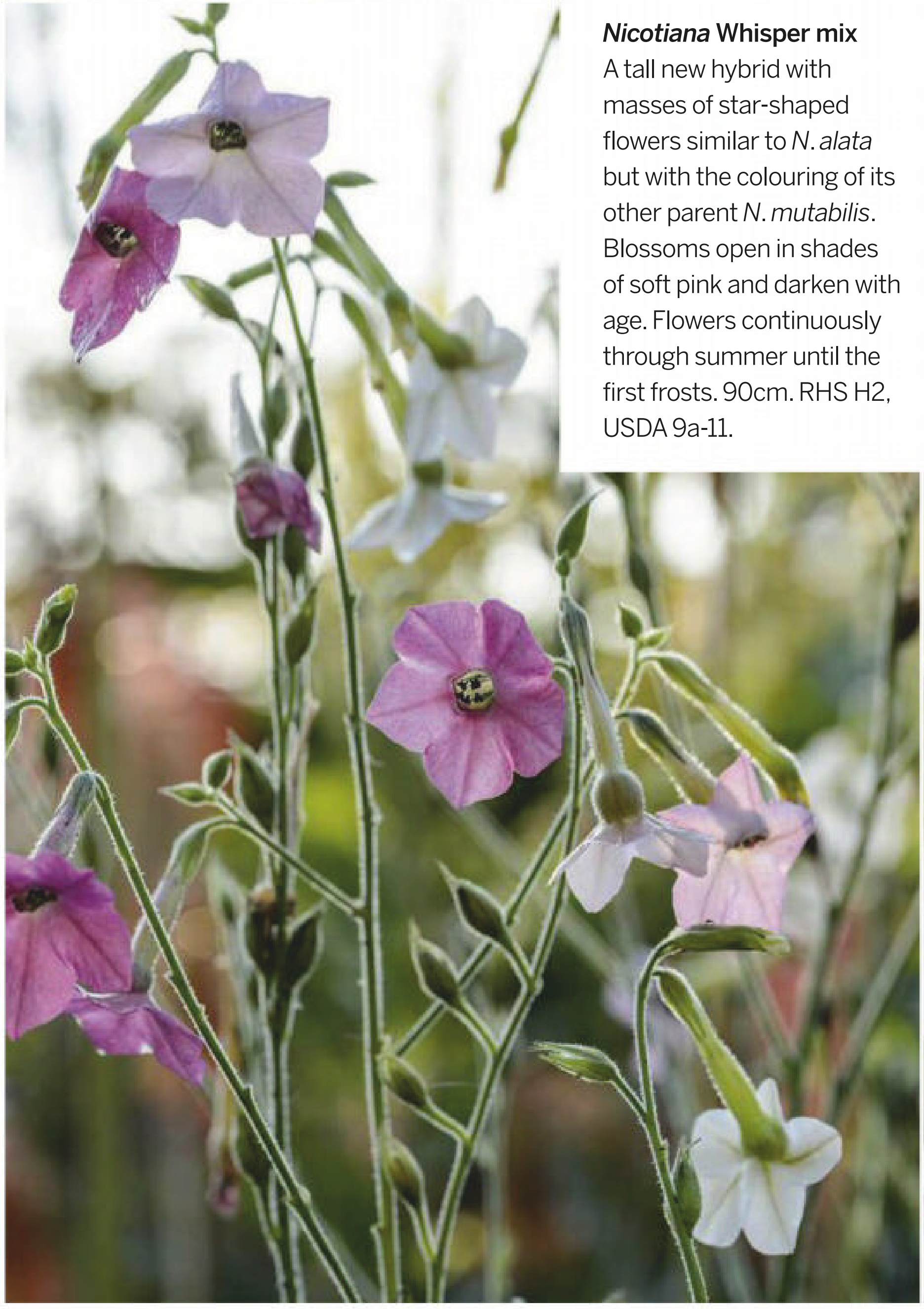
***Nicotiana* 'Lime Green'**
This cultivar has smaller, lime-green flowers on taller stems than the squatter 'Cuba Deep Lime', and also makes an excellent bedding plant. As with most green-flowered plants, it will consort with almost anything and is a long-lasting cut flower. 50cm. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.



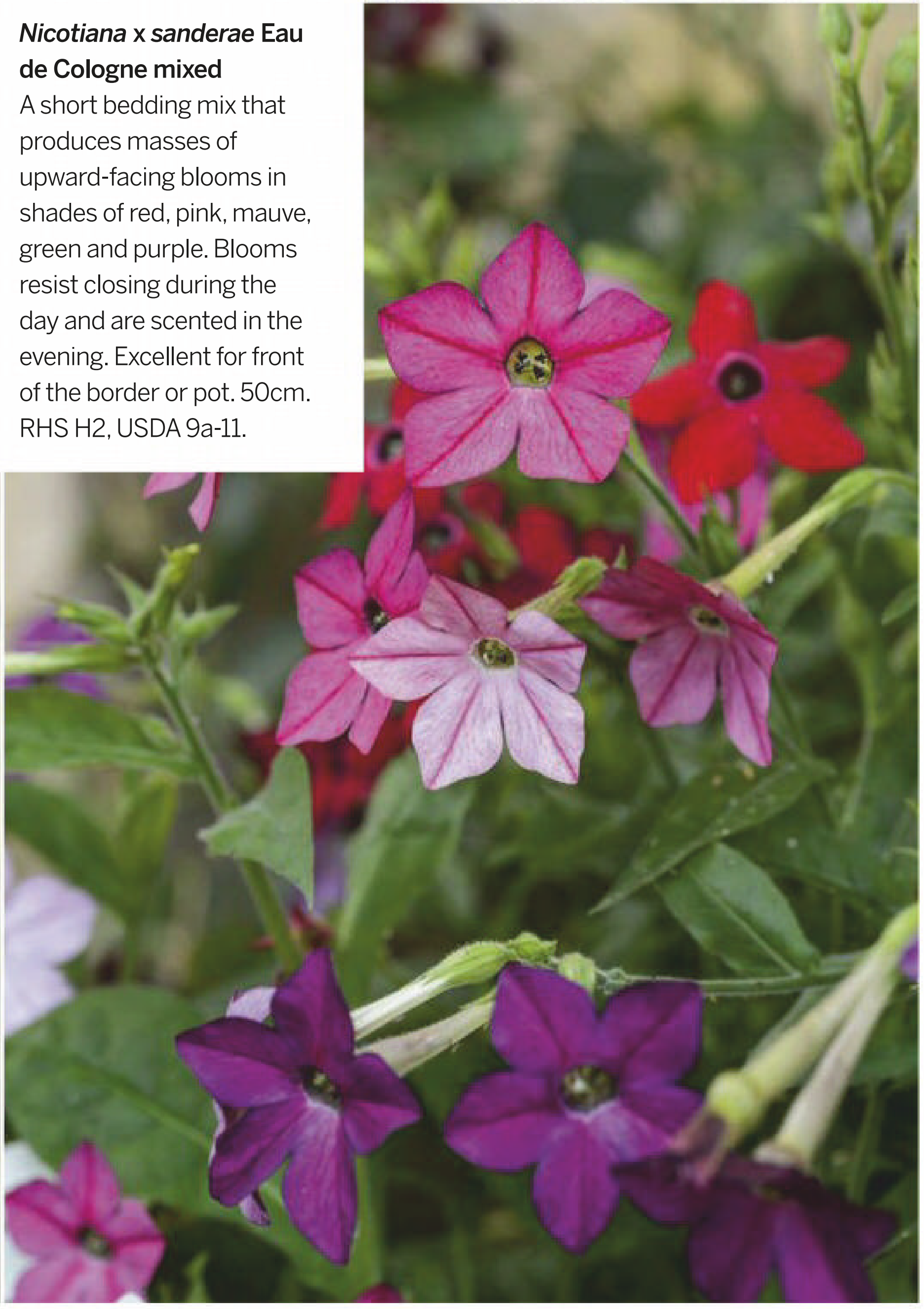
***Nicotiana* 'Starlight Dancer'**
A recent cross between *N. langsdorffii* and *N. alata*. Produces tall, branching stems with masses of green and white, bell-shaped flowers. Looks like a white *N. langsdorffii* and is a good see-through plant for weaving. 1m. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.



Nicotiana sylvestris
Larger and more stately than other ornamental tobaccos, it has striking, paddle-shaped foliage held on strong, woody stems. Long, tubular, white flowers are scented and held in tight clusters that shoot outwards. Can self-seed and is nearly hardy. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.



***Nicotiana* Whisper mix**
A tall new hybrid with masses of star-shaped flowers similar to *N. alata* but with the colouring of its other parent *N. mutabilis*. Blossoms open in shades of soft pink and darken with age. Flowers continuously through summer until the first frosts. 90cm. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.



***Nicotiana* x *sanderae* Eau de Cologne mixed**
A short bedding mix that produces masses of upward-facing blooms in shades of red, pink, mauve, green and purple. Blooms resist closing during the day and are scented in the evening. Excellent for front of the border or pot. 50cm. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

Nicotiana suaveolens
A night-flowering species from Australia with nodding, dainty, tubular white flowers that have a very sweet evening fragrance. Can be grown as an annual or biennial. Particularly good for the conservatory, but equally at home in the garden. 80cm. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

***Nicotiana* x *sanderae* 'Little Nicky'**
A shorter seed strain with large, upward-facing flowers in shades of white, pink and red. The scented flowers look particularly good in combination with a silver foil, such as *Plectranthus argentatus* or *Helichrysum petiolare*. 30cm. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

MANY THANKS TO MALVERLEYS GARDENS IN HAMPSHIRE WHERE THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN.

Cultivation

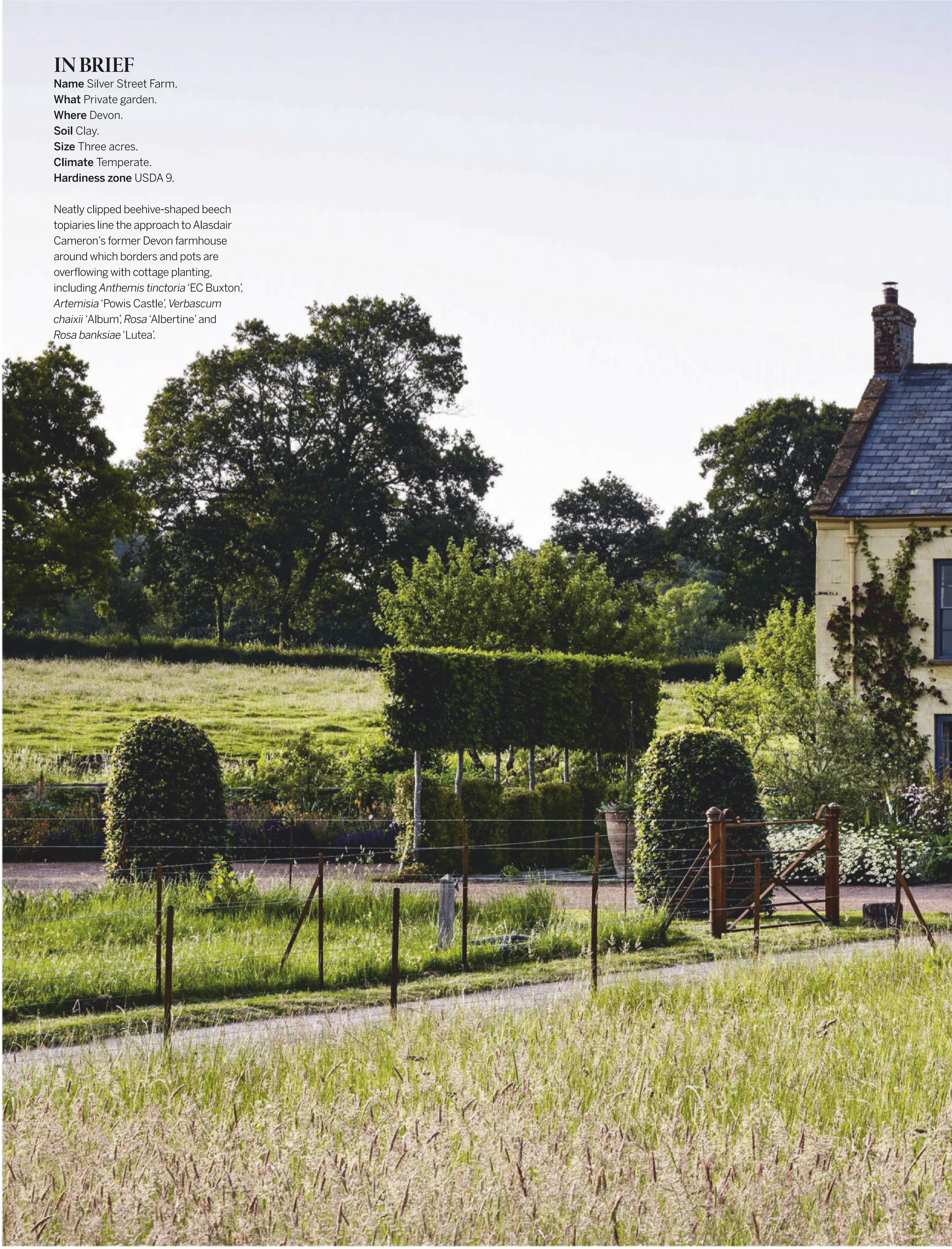
Growing nicotianas for the flower garden is a relatively easy affair. To get the most vigorous plants, you should grow them annually from seed, although there are some species that are perennial. In warmer countries, or in a heated greenhouse, they can make comparatively large, long-lived plants. They can be propagated from cuttings or offsets, even self-sown seedlings weeded out from the gravel beneath greenhouse benches will regrow from any roots left behind.

Seed should be sown thinly on to moist, light compost from February to March. The seed is generally quite fine, and should only be covered very lightly and kept under glass or indoors at around 18-20°C. Germination takes about a fortnight and is usually quite uniform. Seedlings should then be moved on individually into plugs or small pots as soon as they are large enough to handle. Make sure seedlings have been kept well-watered before transferring, this will help the small plants negotiate the stress of upheaval. It is also worth noting that tobaccos have brittle, clingy leaves that stick to one another and will rip or break if you don't take due care while separating. Nicotianas are hungry plants, so avoid letting them become pot-bound or starved as this will pinch their growth and give you small, spindly plants.

Although tobaccos can tolerate mild frosts, it's important to ensure a gentle transition from the heated greenhouse to the garden. Plants should be hardened off in a cold frame before planting out in late May. Even with the onset of warmer days, do keep an eye on overnight temperatures as a cold night can shock the growth of these tender plants – it's much better to delay planting until the danger has passed and hit the ground running. Nicotianas will thrive in a deeply dug, light soil that has been improved with good compost. Water and feed as necessary through the summer. Slugs and snails can be a nuisance for young plants and make untidy holes in the leaves, also be cautious of aphids and whitefly, which will colonise both the flowers and foliage. Hot, dry weather can render the plants more susceptible to mildew and a fungicidal spray may be needed under these conditions. Nicotianas have strong stems and require little staking, but in an exposed position or in windy weather the plants may rock at the base, in which case a short cane would be beneficial to support the plants.

Where to buy and see

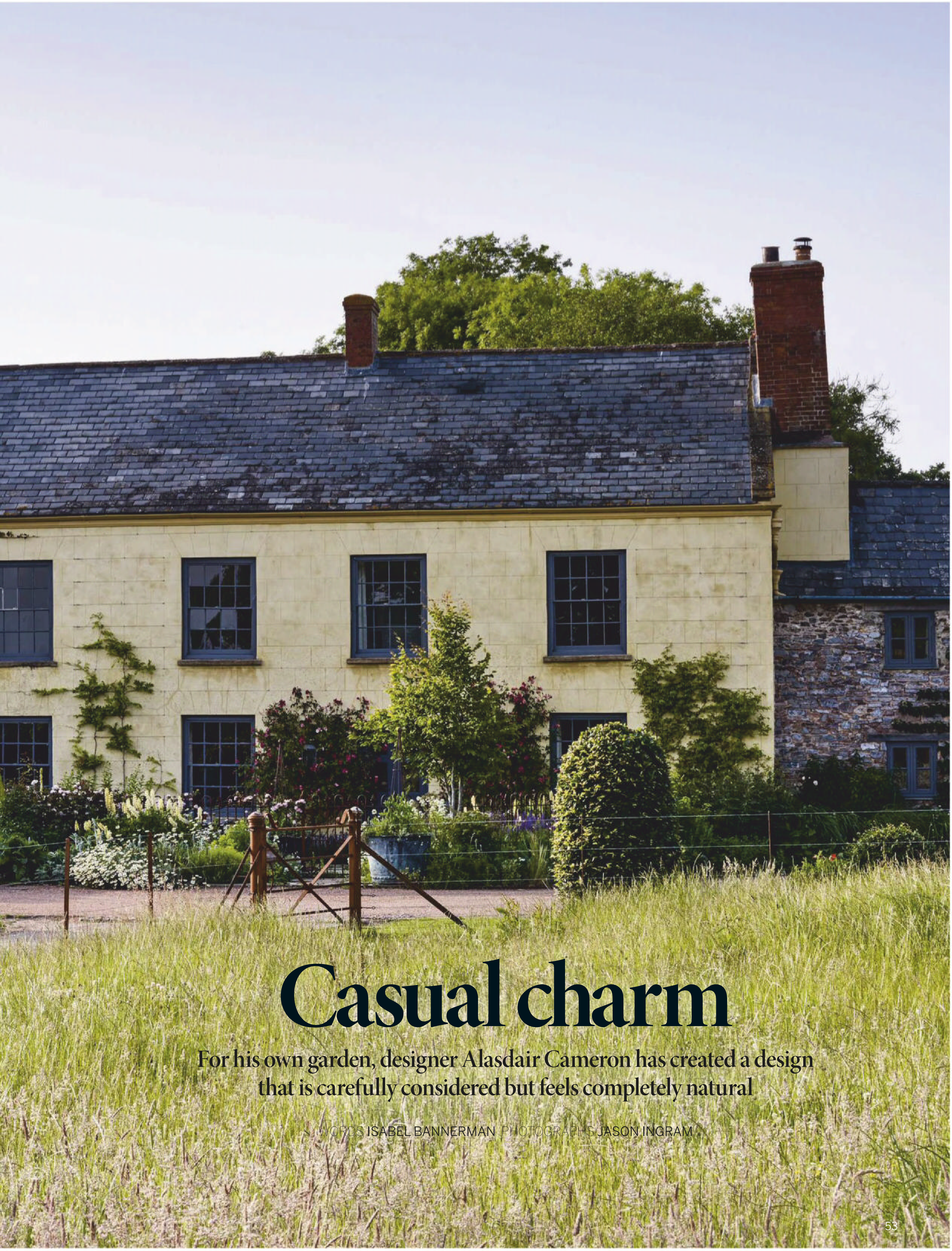
- **Chiltern Seeds**
  Crowmarsh Battle Barns, 114 Preston Crowmarsh,
  Wallingford,
  Oxfordshire OX10 6SL.
  Tel 01491 824675,
  chilternseeds.co.uk
- **Plants of Distinction**
  Church Farm Cottage,
  The Street, nr Stowmarket,
  Suffolk IP14 6HG.
  Tel 01449 721720,
  plantsofdistinction.co.uk
- **Special Plants**
  Special Plants,
  Greenways Lane, Cold Ashton, Chippenham,
  Wiltshire SN14 8LA.
  Tel 01225 891686,
  specialplants.net
- **Great Dixter**
  Northiam, Rye,
  East Sussex TN31 6PH.
  Tel 01797 252878,
  greatdixter.co.uk
- **Malverleys Gardens**
  East End,
  Hampshire RG20 0AA.
  malverleys.co.uk
  Open by appointment and usually for the NGS in April and July.
- **Perch Hill Farm**
  Willingford Lane,
  Brightling,
  Robertsbridge,
  East Sussex TN32 5HP.
  Tel 01424 838000,
  sarahraven.com
  Open by appointment and on select visiting days.



IN BRIEF

Name Silver Street Farm.
What Private garden.
Where Devon.
Soil Clay.
Size Three acres.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

Neatly clipped beehive-shaped beech topiaries line the approach to Alasdair Cameron's former Devon farmhouse around which borders and pots are overflowing with cottage planting, including *Anthemis tinctoria* 'EC Buxton', *Artemisia* 'Powis Castle', *Verbascum chaixii* 'Album', *Rosa* 'Albertine' and *Rosa banksiae* 'Lutea'.



Casual charm

For his own garden, designer Alasdair Cameron has created a design that is carefully considered but feels completely natural

WORDS ISABEL BANNERMAN PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Leaving the huge, hot sky on the edge of the Somerset Levels heading west, the road turns east and into the folds of the Blackdown Hills as you cross into Devon. Here the ferny lanes are in deep shadow, the shade of imperturbable oak trees. Mercurial rivulets hug the edges of the dark, which suddenly lights up in the break created by a welcoming gate and a farmhouse, its formal façade basking in the heat, blushing behind a riot of roses and rather shy, grey sash windows. This is home to Alasdair and Tor Cameron and their three children, and although Alasdair and Tor have done so much in the eight years since they moved here, nothing they have done jars with the fundamentals of Devonshire fields and farming. Sheep graze behind gates and fences that are new but do not feel it; a ruddy, red local pea gravel runs up and round the rescued cobbles and is laid as a thin dusting over compacted hoggin for firmness under foot and wheel. These are the details that make a garden and house feel properly grounded in its landscape. They make it smell and feel right, as though it has all just 'happened' – the hardest thing to achieve.

Alasdair is the best kind of energetic plantaholic; a garden designer with a successful business, he has fearlessly drained and taken in hand the claggy field he found behind the house. He then dug up and planted, not just a garden, but huge swathes of waving fronds and inflorescence, rivers of colour intersected by curling byways. The scale of things is large enough for his daughter to trot a pony on a path between torrents of lush herbaceous planting and a camomile lawn so green it might be under water. Umbellifers abound and they have done something I have always meant to do, planted spare parsnips from the vegetable garden to grow into metre-high perennials with flat-headed umbels. The whole of the sweeping border is lively with leaf shape, a dancing graph of spikey heights intended to be left over winter. I have a theory that prairie planting cannot be made to work in this part of the South West, where the lack of frost and high autumn rainfall merely turn a blackened border to a slush, dahlias turning to jelly. But here the standing seedheads bring as much joy to Alasdair and Tor as the high summer abundance.

The southerly aspect on the entrance side of the house is a feast of foaming *Anthemis tinctoria* 'EC Buxton' and *Lupinus luteus,* which grows tall among the fancier lupin cultivars 'Cashmere Cream' and 'Chandelier' – all of which are a buttery yellow, echoing the limewash on the house. Rust- and ochre-coloured bearded irises play with this theme. A slate table and chairs are almost engulfed. Lead tubs fit to burst, tulips followed by sweet peas giving way to salvias, silver helichrysum and umbellifers. The planters are various and generous, full of treasures and orphans; one designer perk is to collect up discarded or failed plantlings from jobs and bring them back to life. It is one reason why designers' gardens are often un-designed, a sentimental mixture of chuck outs and misfits we could not leave behind, battled into our plots when rushing between jobs. Alasdair nurtures these 'miserables' and everything burgeons for him: aromatic and culinary herbs; teepees of sweet peas; the colours irresistible of *Salvia involucrata* 'Hadspen' and *S. confertiflora*, the red velvet sage.

Sage brings us round to smells, and scent carries us to the sheltered, west-facing end of the house where Alasdair has made an enclosed garden of scented things. Alasdair and I share a worship of old-fashioned scented roses, such as *Rosa* 'Charles de Mills' and the creamy violet-scented *R. banksiae*, growing well, but yet to flower. Here are gathered all the spring-smelly flowered shrubs, daphnes, olearias, and *Viburnum* x *carlcephalum* and *V. carlesii*. Swept on with the urgency and impatience of the plant fiend with not enough hours in the day, Alasdair rushes me to the east of the house where he has just opened up a whole new front of figs, rosemary, espaliered apricots and lavender. Again, these had to be 're-homed' in a hurry.

Scent is a driver but so is fearless colour. I commend any gardener who successfully plants a rambling rubicund *Rosa* 'Chevy Chase' with the colour saturated buds of apricot *R*. 'Climbing Lady Hillingdon'. Here these two romp successfully up the ochre lime-washed front of their house (around the cool grey windows). This combination is a startling echo of the tour de force here, a pair of 3m-high (and still climbing) *Rosa* x *odorata* 'Mutabilis' either side of the front door. I have seen *R*. x *odorata* 'Bengal Crimson' climb to great heights but not 'Mutabilis', yet here it is clambering up the house, luxuriant in shaggy showers of shocking pink and egg-yolk bloom. This boldness is completely successful and is repeated throughout the garden, clockwork orange, rock'n'roll purple and starlet scarlet all sing together, threaded on cadences of sulphur and lime phlomis and *Cephalaria gigantea*, and yellow-hued *Patrinia*.

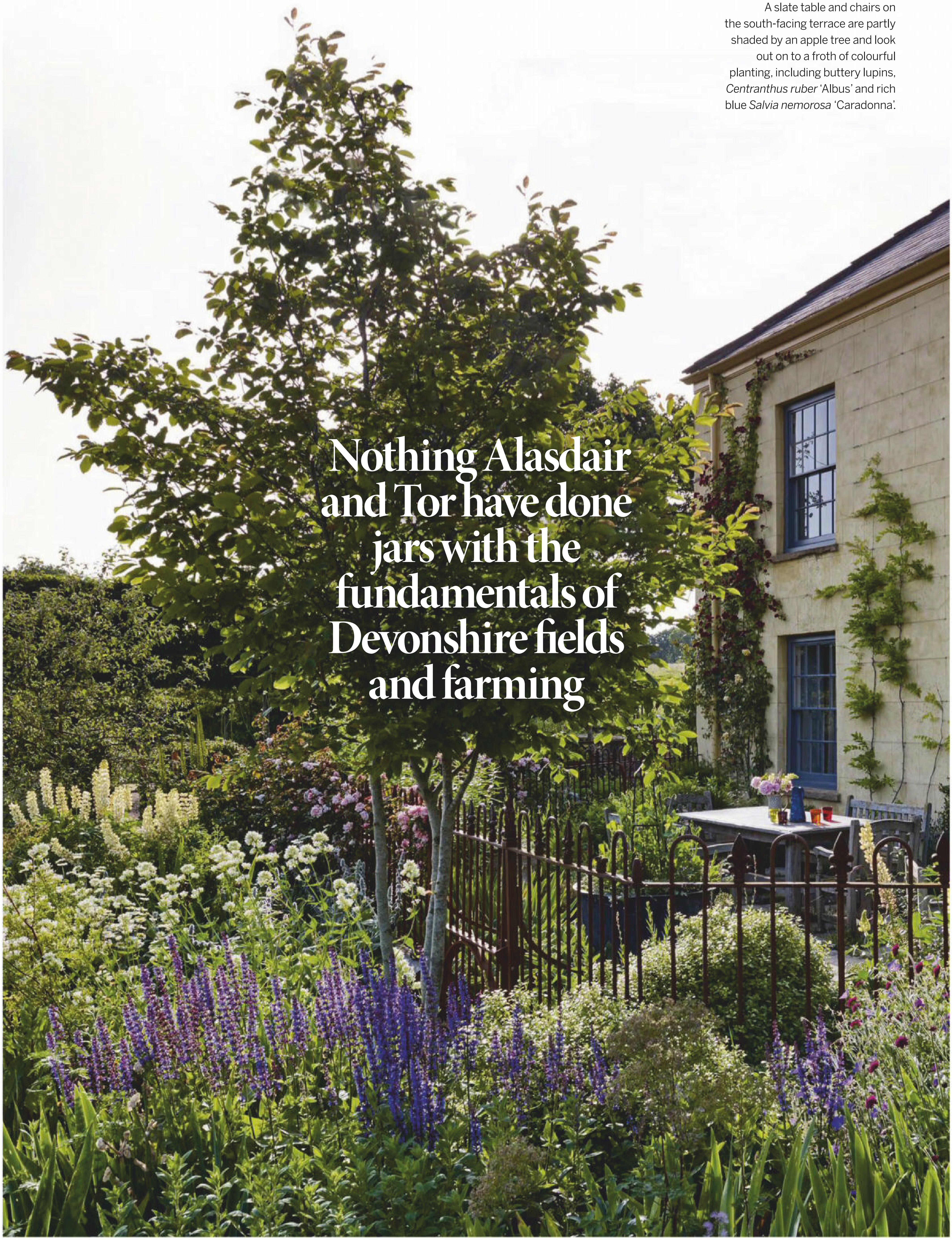
You can tell from the use of structural elements – clipped green-leaved beech beehives arranged formally but modestly along the front of the house, and the *Malus transitoria* as a transition from garden to meadow orchard – that the makers of this garden are informed, environmentally aware and professional. The garden at Silver Street Farm is completely assured, but nowhere does it even mutter 'designer'. It is the home and haven of, not just plantspeople, but people who love to nurture and be playful with their plants. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

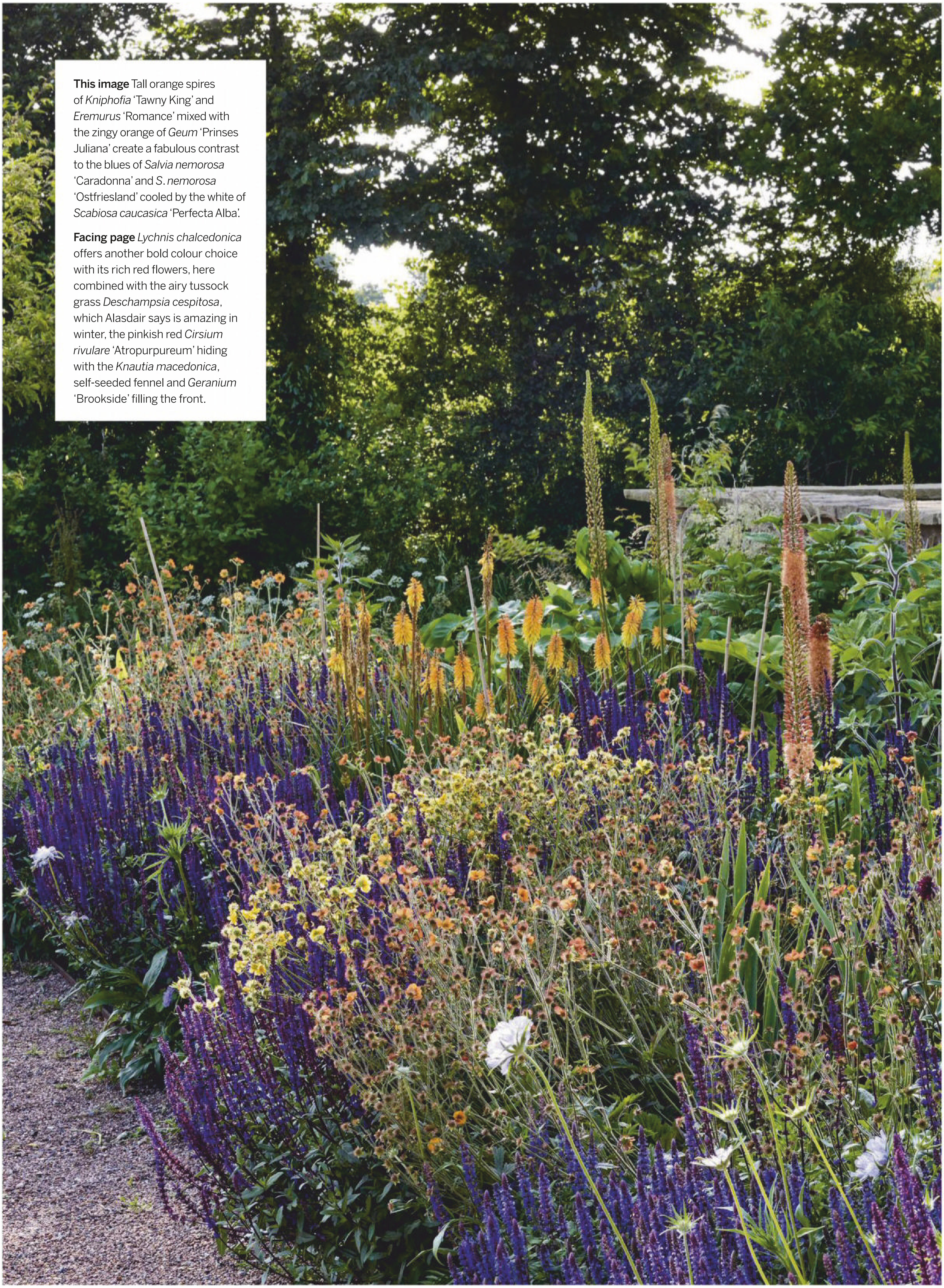
Find out more about Alasdair's work at **camerongardens.co.uk**

Turn the page to see more of Silver Street Farm

A slate table and chairs on the south-facing terrace are partly shaded by an apple tree and look out on to a froth of colourful planting, including buttery lupins, *Centranthus ruber* 'Albus' and rich blue *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna'.



Nothing Alasdair and Tor have done jars with the fundamentals of Devonshire fields and farming



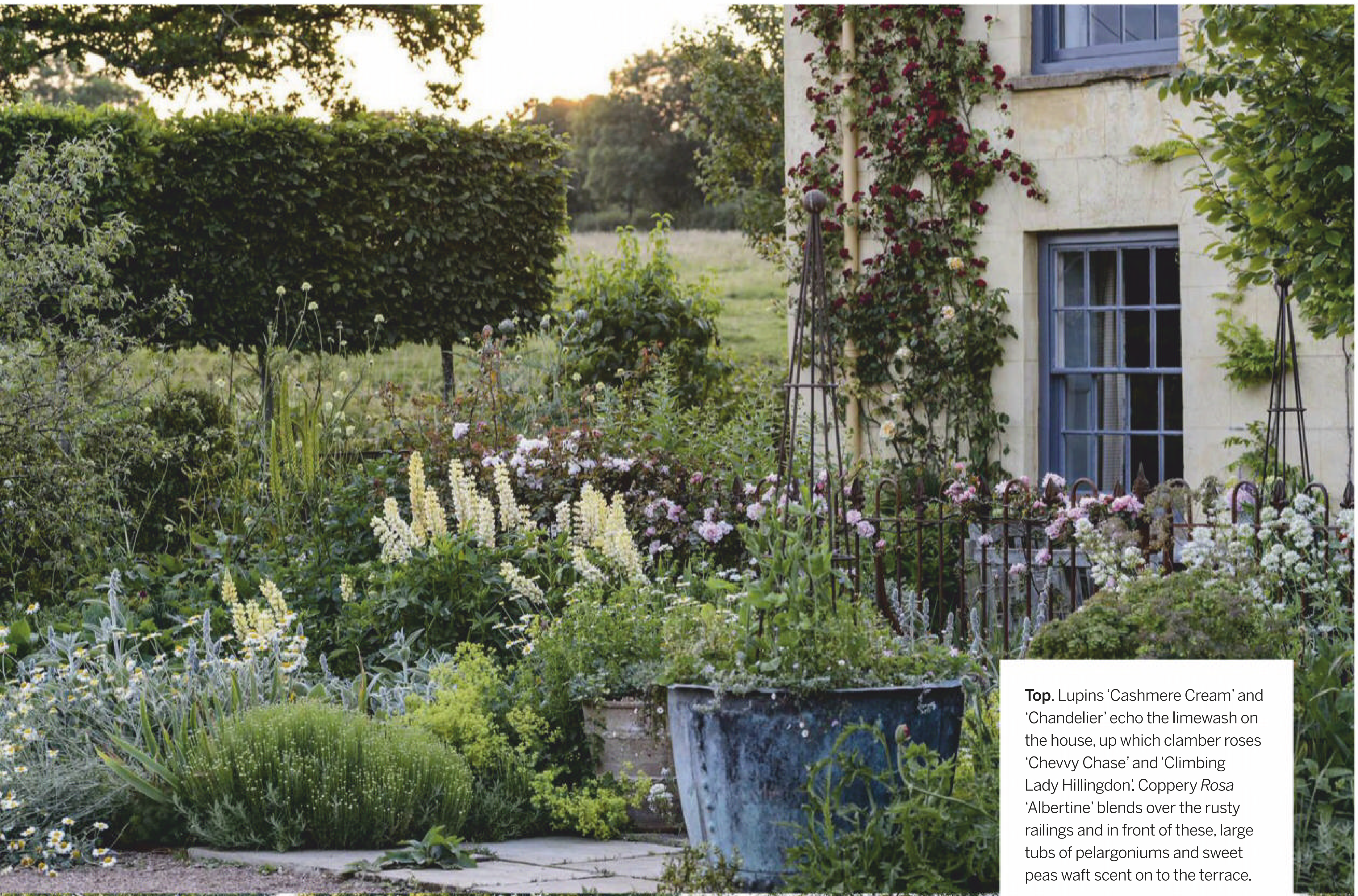
This image Tall orange spires of *Kniphofia* 'Tawny King' and *Eremurus* 'Romance' mixed with the zingy orange of *Geum* 'Prinses Juliana' create a fabulous contrast to the blues of *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna' and *S. nemorosa* 'Ostfriesland' cooled by the white of *Scabiosa caucasica* 'Perfecta Alba'.

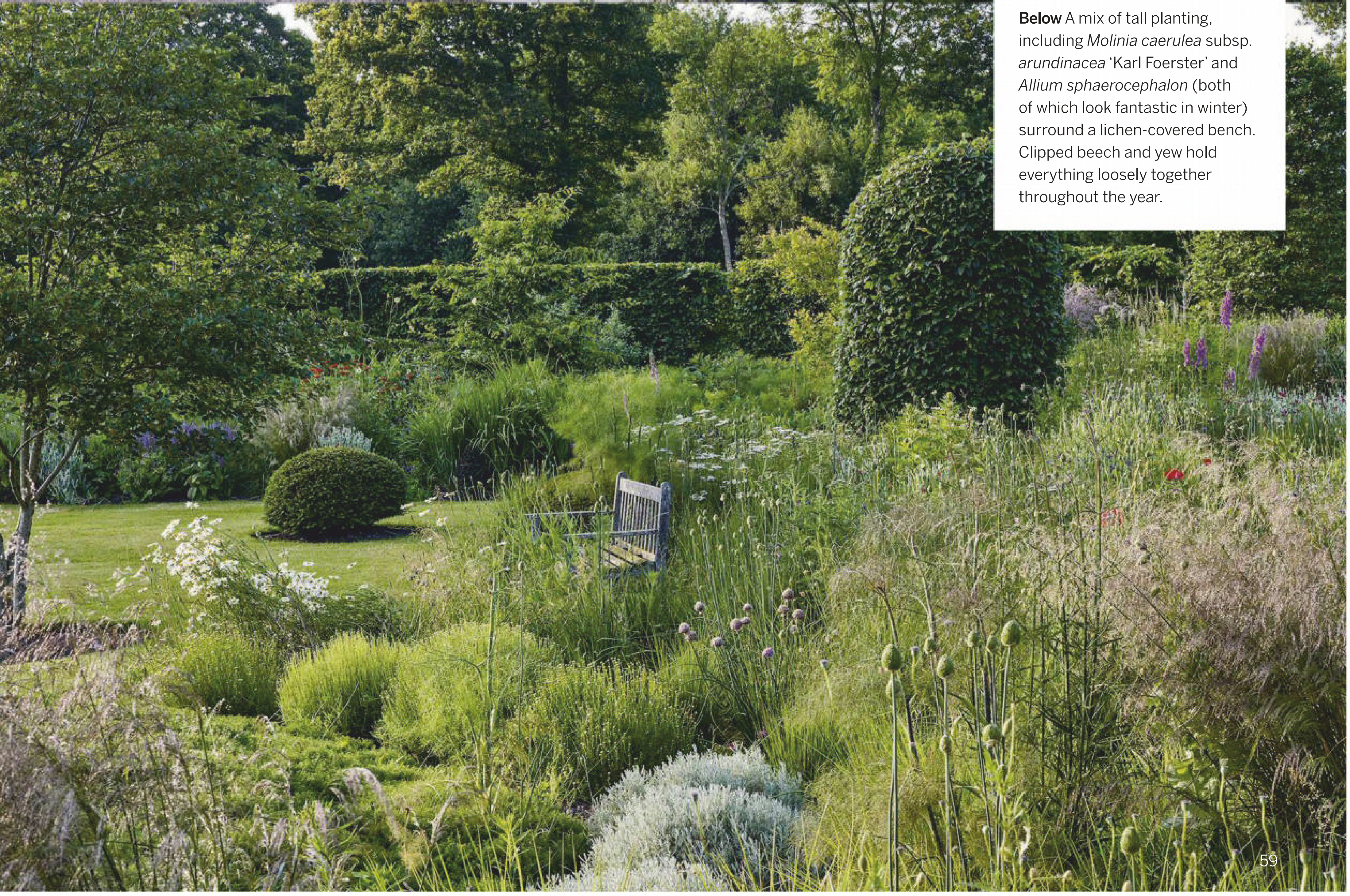
Facing page *Lychnis chalcedonica* offers another bold colour choice with its rich red flowers, here combined with the airy tussock grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, which Alasdair says is amazing in winter, the pinkish red *Cirsium rivulare* 'Atropurpureum' hiding with the *Knautia macedonica*, self-seeded fennel and *Geranium* 'Brookside' filling the front.

Clockwork orange, rock'n'roll purple, and starlet scarlet all sing together, threaded on cadences of lime

Top Alasdair wanted to keep what he could of the old farm orchard using spring bulbs and long grass, which is cut in August. When adding form with some clipped buns of beech he was keen that it should still be random and informal. The scented garden can be seen in the background nestled before a wall.

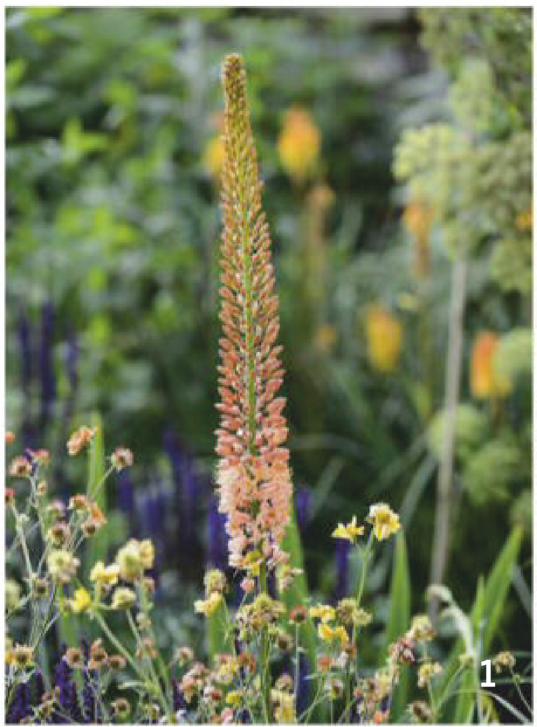
Below Informal topiary gives winter structure and punctuation to the big river border that flows round the whole lawn and back to the house and tottering barns, without being too 'designer'. This is helped by swathes of grasses with *Lychnis coronaria*, wild anthemis daisies, lovage and foxgloves.





Top. Lupins 'Cashmere Cream' and 'Chandelier' echo the limewash on the house, up which clamber roses 'Chevvy Chase' and 'Climbing Lady Hillingdon'. Coppery *Rosa* 'Albertine' blends over the rusty railings and in front of these, large tubs of pelargoniums and sweet peas waft scent on to the terrace.

Below A mix of tall planting, including *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Karl Foerster' and *Allium sphaerocephalon* (both of which look fantastic in winter) surround a lichen-covered bench. Clipped beech and yew hold everything loosely together throughout the year.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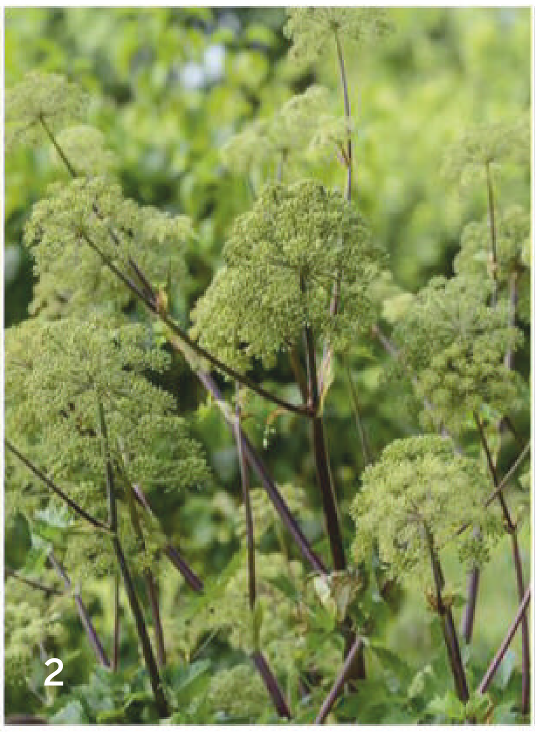
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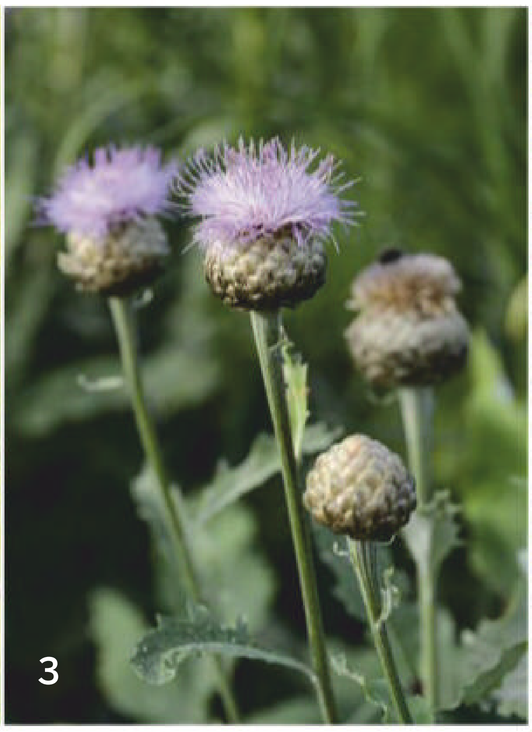
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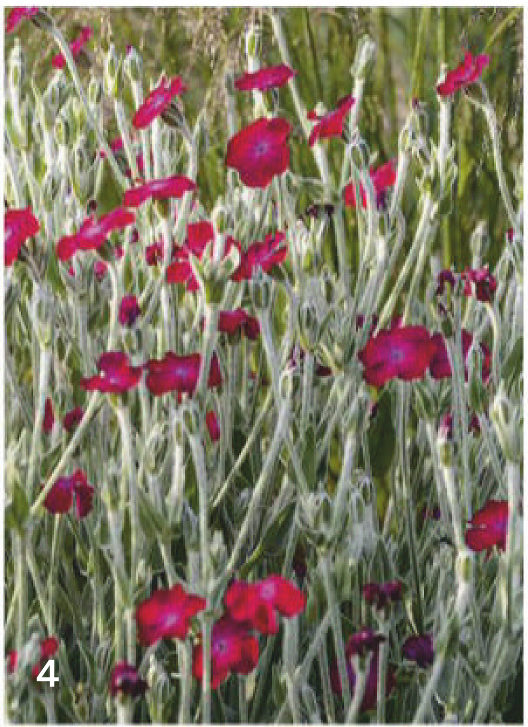
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12 KEY PLANTS

1 *Eremurus* ‘Romance’ Its radioactive orange spires wave above a summer border, but needs really well-drained soil in a sun-baked spot. 1.2m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b[†].

2 *Angelica archangelica* This wild celery is a delicious and aniseed-scented, architectural winner. Even grown from seed it can immediately create a flourish of electric-green parasols by summer. Grows almost anywhere so needs a firm hand on the self-seedlings. 2m. RHS H6,USDA 5a-7b.

3 *Rhaponticum centaureoides* Alasdair loves ornamental thistles, and these papery globes, which open into a classic thistle, are easily grown in sunlight. 1m.

4 *Lychnis coronaria* Ideal for a sunny border, this biennial has delicate, rose-pink flowers held above silvery grey, felted leaves. 90cm. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

5 *Cephalaria gigantea* Known as the giant scabious for its sulphur-yellow pincushion flowers, this is a border plant that is both delicate and towering. Easy to grow in rich, damp soils, it flowers early then intermittently all summer. 2m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.

6 *Euphorbia schillingii* A spurge from Nepal that grows easily here, liking rich, dappled shade and a bit of a mulch over winter. In return it offers the freshness of intense, acid-green bracts throughout summer. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

7 *Rosa* ‘Albertine’ It’s a heart-stopping moment when this rose flowers, with loose, coppery apricot blooms that are fruitily scented. Even when not flowering it is perfect grown along a railing as at Silver Street Farm. 4m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

8 *Salvia nemorosa* ‘Ostfriesland’ Probably one of the most useful of the always useful sages. Provides colour all summer, is beloved of butterflies, reliable and easy to grow. Robust but best grown in free-draining soil. 1m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

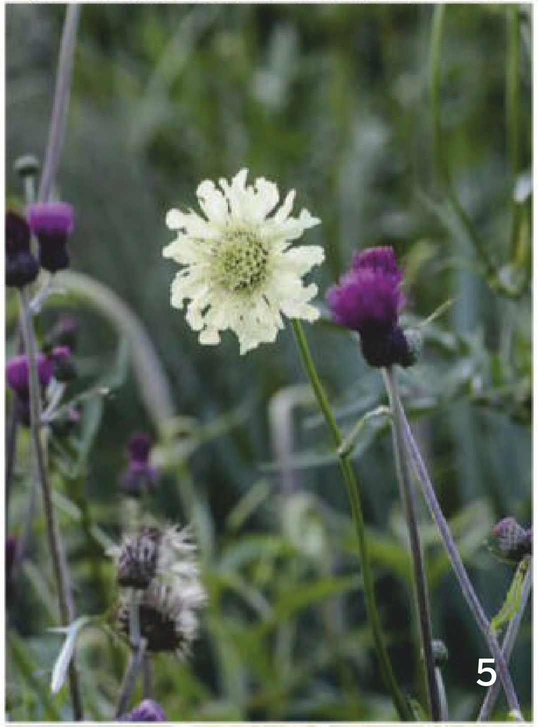
9 *Geum* ‘Prinses Juliana’ Vivid tangerine semi-double flower in clumps, this Beth Chatto favourite provides brilliant colour for the first half of summer, and it’s a piece of cake to grow with good drainage. 40cm. AGM. RHS H7.

10 *Phlomis tuberosa* Clusters of hooded, lavender flowers are held on purple stems above a mat of green leaves that darken with age. 1.2m. RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

11 *Lychnis chalcedonica* The flat heads of true scarlet stars sit on the greenest of stems at about 1m. Alasdair finds it grows easily in his rich but drained beds in summer but sadly it doesn’t overwinter well. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

12 *Deschampsia cespitosa* Easy to grow and hardy, this tufted hair grass, along with *Molinia*, is a key winter plant in Alasdair’s borders. It starts a rush-like green, developing into a moving shimmer of straw colour and seedheads. 1m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

***Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†] Hardiness ratings given where available.**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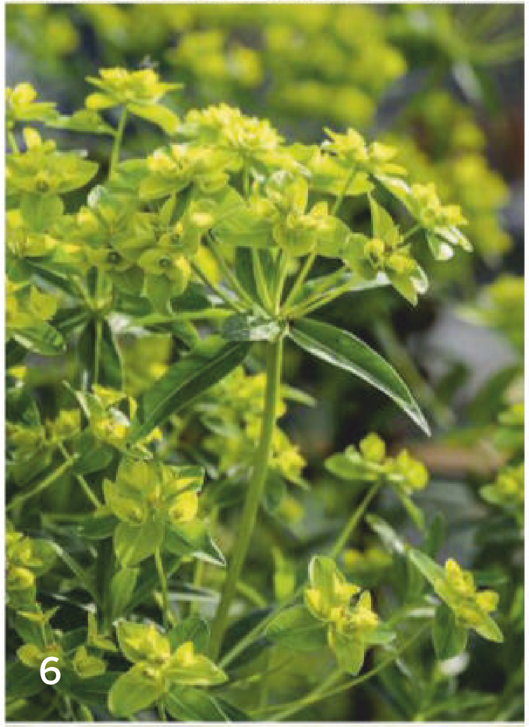
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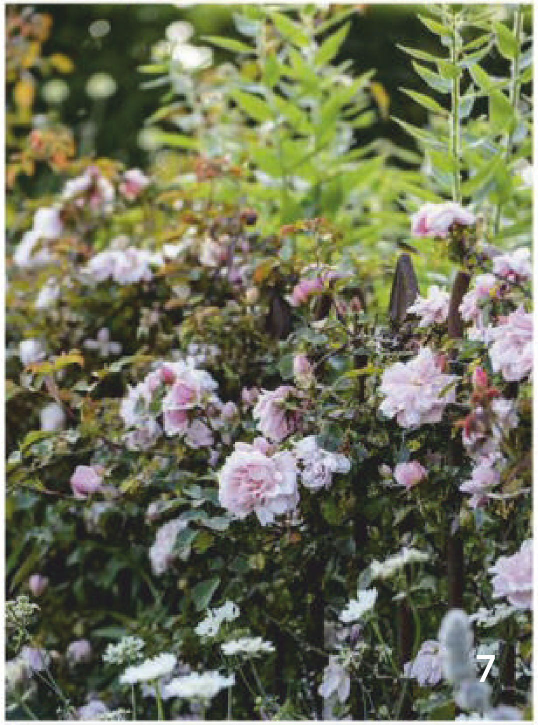
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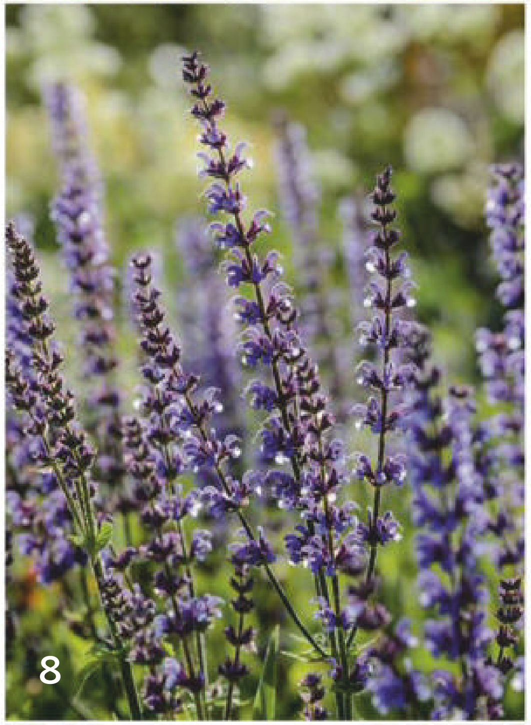
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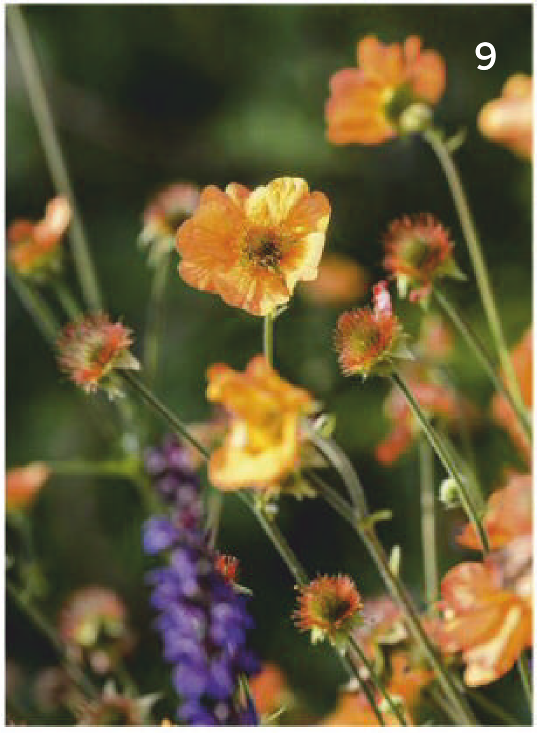
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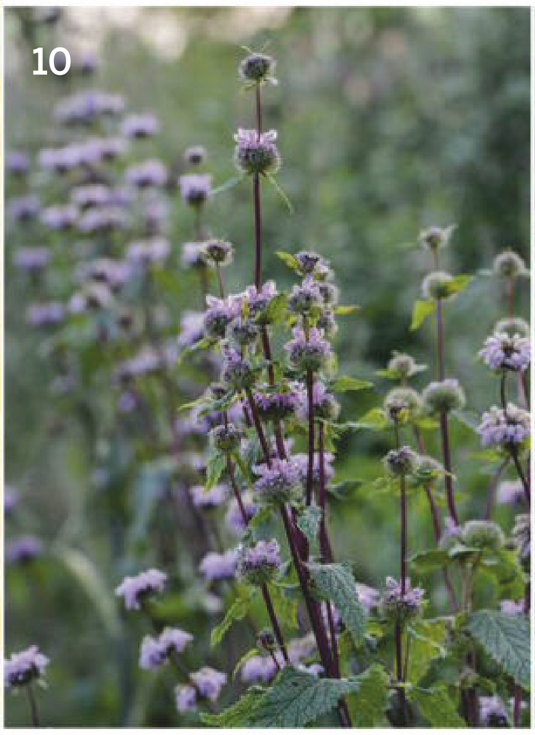
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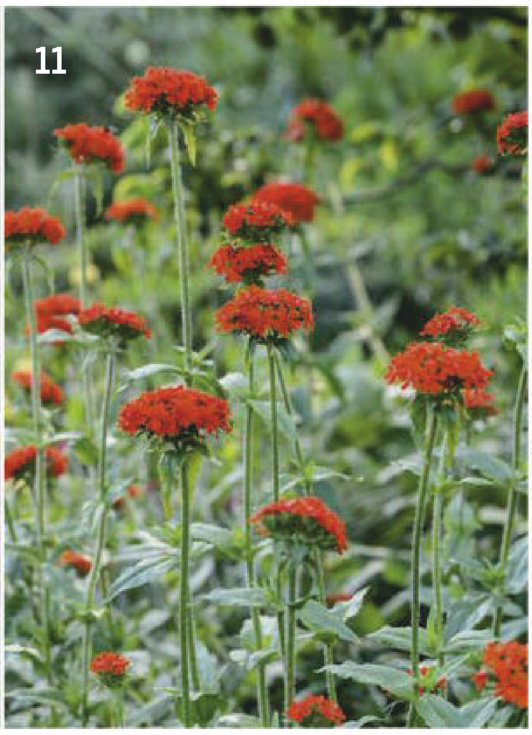
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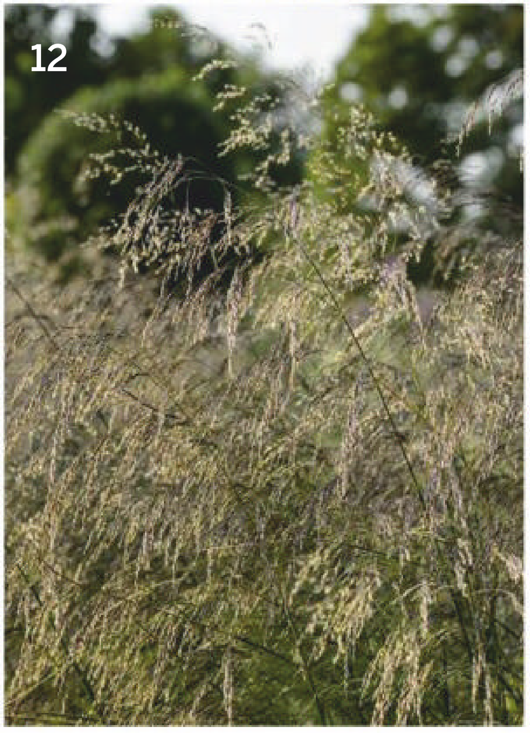
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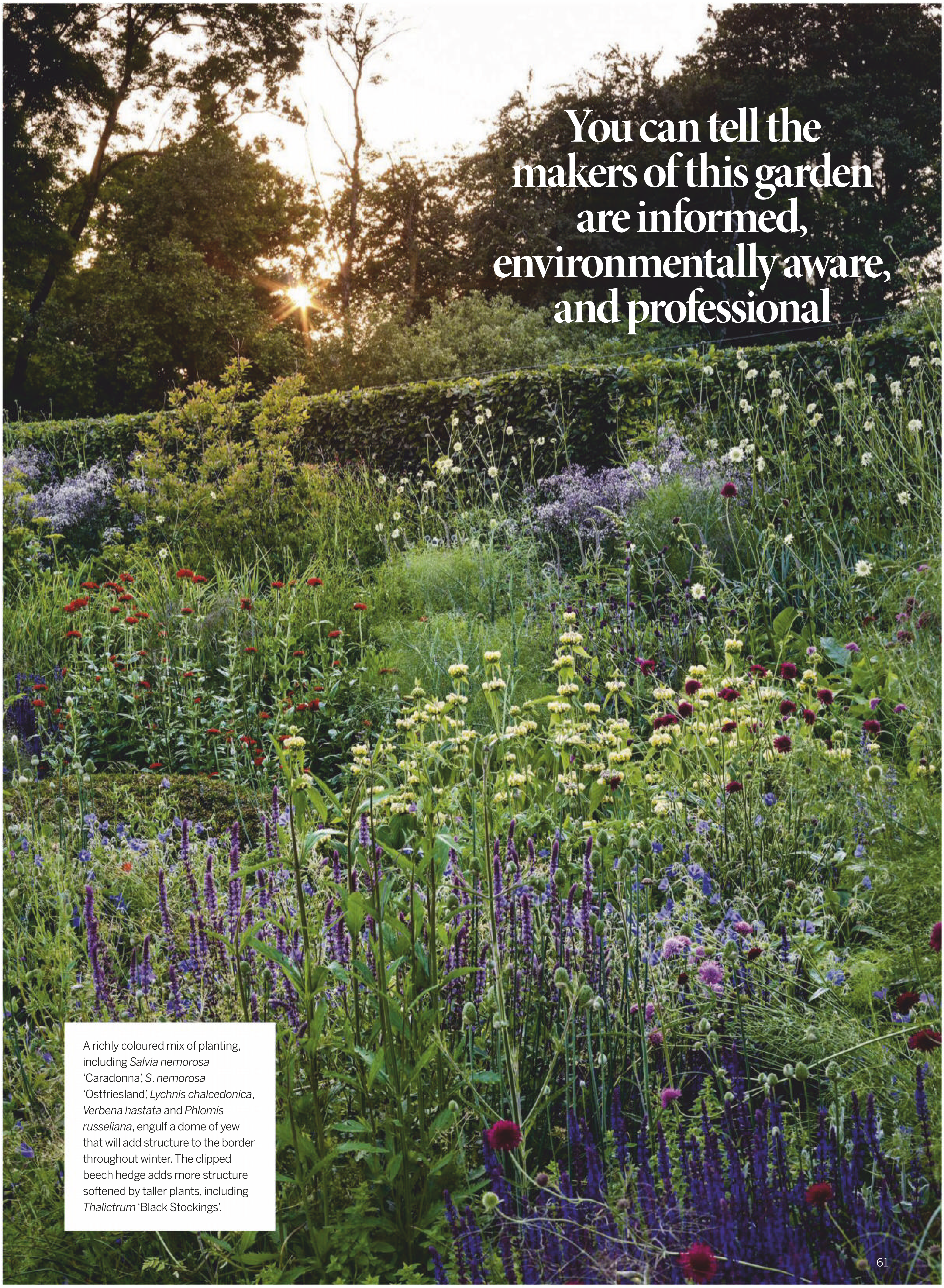
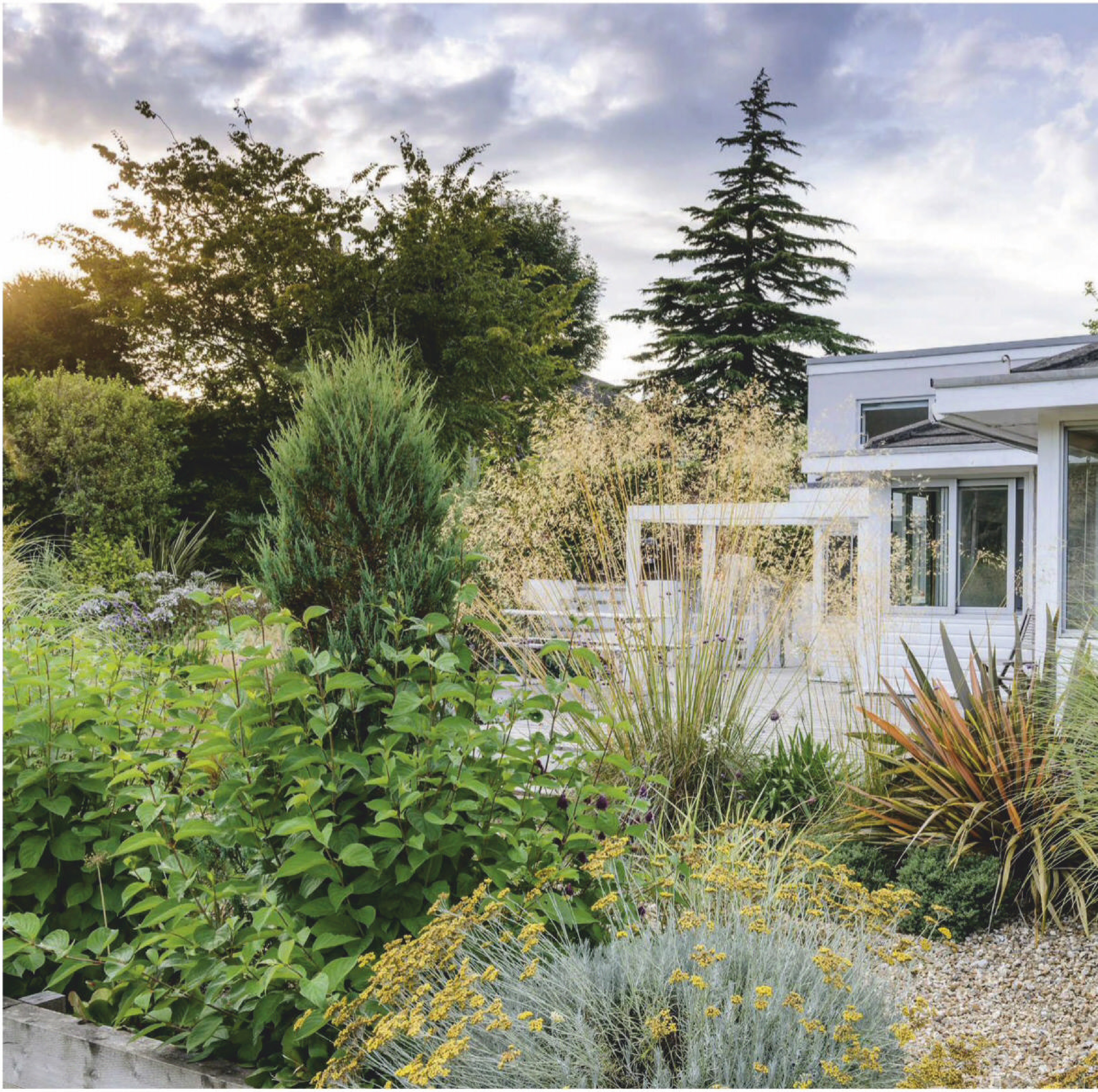


You can tell the makers of this garden are informed, environmentally aware, and professional

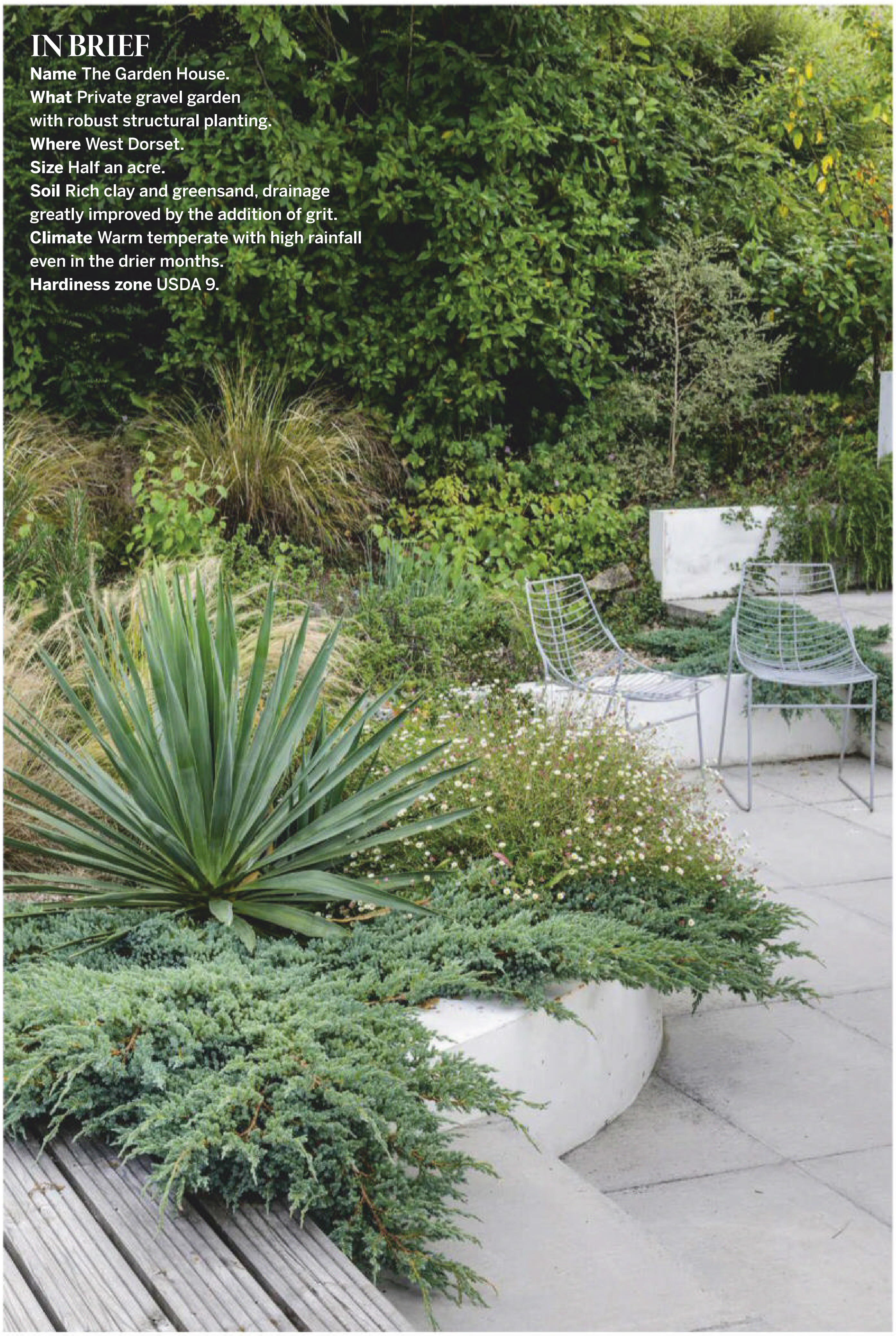
A richly coloured mix of planting, including *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna', *S. nemorosa* 'Ostfriesland', *Lychnis chalcedonica*, *Verbena hastata* and *Phlomis russeliana*, engulf a dome of yew that will add structure to the border throughout winter. The clipped beech hedge adds more structure softened by taller plants, including *Thalictrum* 'Black Stockings'.



Open house

For their mid-century modernist home in west Dorset, Vanessa Barlow and Jethro Marshall looked to designer Alice Meacham to create an airy gravel garden that would complement their open plan home

WORDS HANNAH GARDNER PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



IN BRIEF

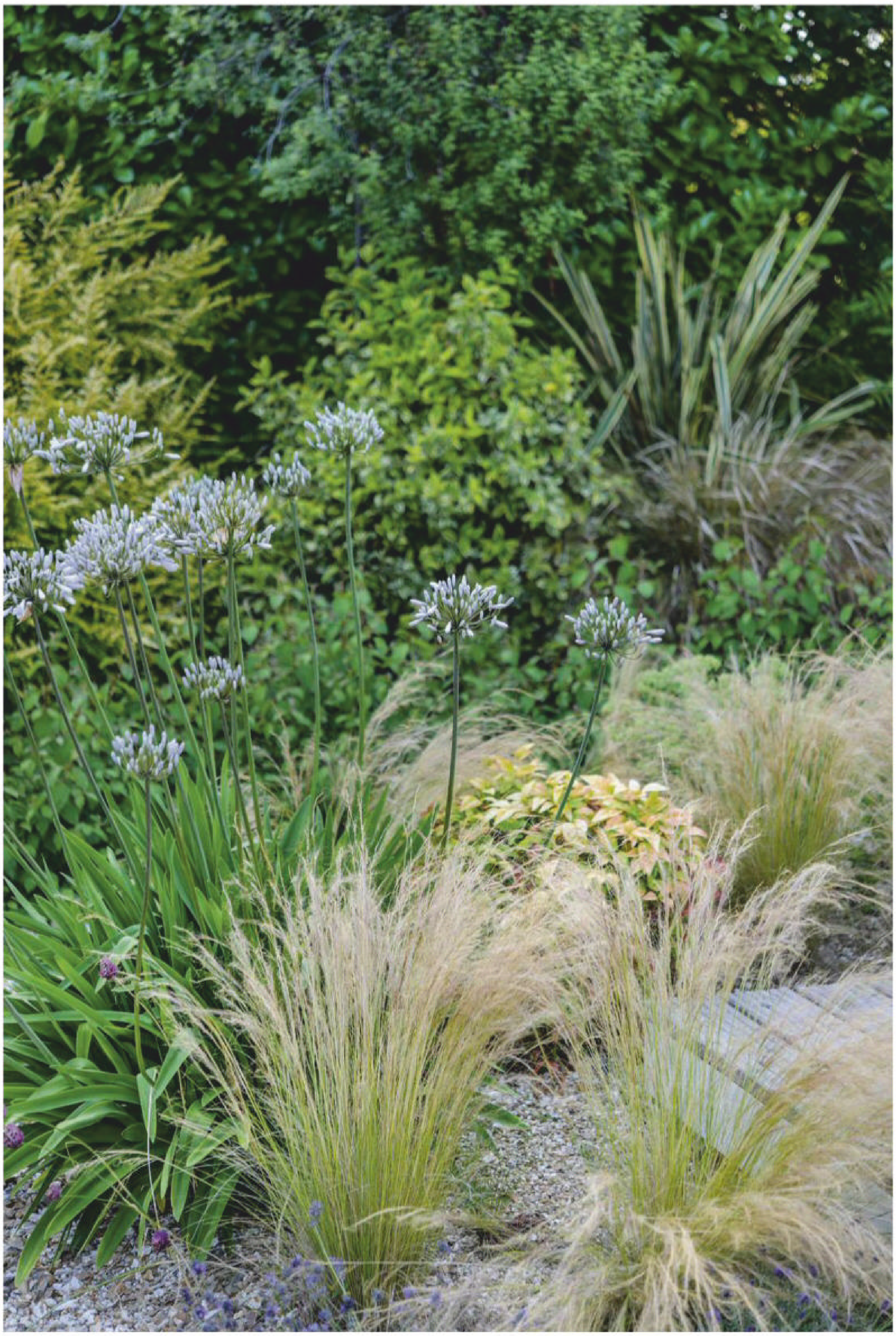
Name The Garden House.
What Private gravel garden with robust structural planting.
Where West Dorset.
Size Half an acre.
Soil Rich clay and greensand, drainage greatly improved by the addition of grit.
Climate Warm temperate with high rainfall even in the drier months.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

The romantic Dorset hills are still gently rolling as you drop to the village of Uplyme, a picturesque pause before a final mile-long descent to the sandy bay and coastal town of Lyme Regis. Here above the main town the Lym River runs through a sheltered wooded valley and a jigsaw of houses line the slopes. Hidden among them, the Garden House is an interesting example of sleek and functional mid-century modern architecture. Designed in 1964 by architect Howard Mitchell, this home feels secluded and relaxed despite the presence of a cluster of immediate neighbours. The single-storey house sits within the former apple orchard of an adjacent property, and a few surviving apple trees still hug the swan-neck drive that curves through open lawns to deliver visitors at the steps of the house. Mature *Acer* trees, evergreen hedges and wandering thickets of bamboo create privacy, gently pushed to the margins allowing a big seaside sky to bathe the sloping south-facing site in light.

The owners Vanessa Barlow and Jethro Marshall moved here from London 11 years ago, wanting to bring some urban style to their new rural relocation. Appreciating the classic clean lines and natural ▷

Facing page From high summer, the golden seedheads of *Stipa gigantea* create a translucent veil, softening the house's strong lines, and connecting the vibrant bronze of bold phormiums and ochre flowers of *Helichrysum italicum*.

Above The planting in the borders adjacent to the terrace provides textural contrast and year-round interest. The low-sprawling limbs of *Juniperus squamata* 'Blue Carpet' are juxtaposed with the scampering mounds of *Erigeron karvinskianus*.

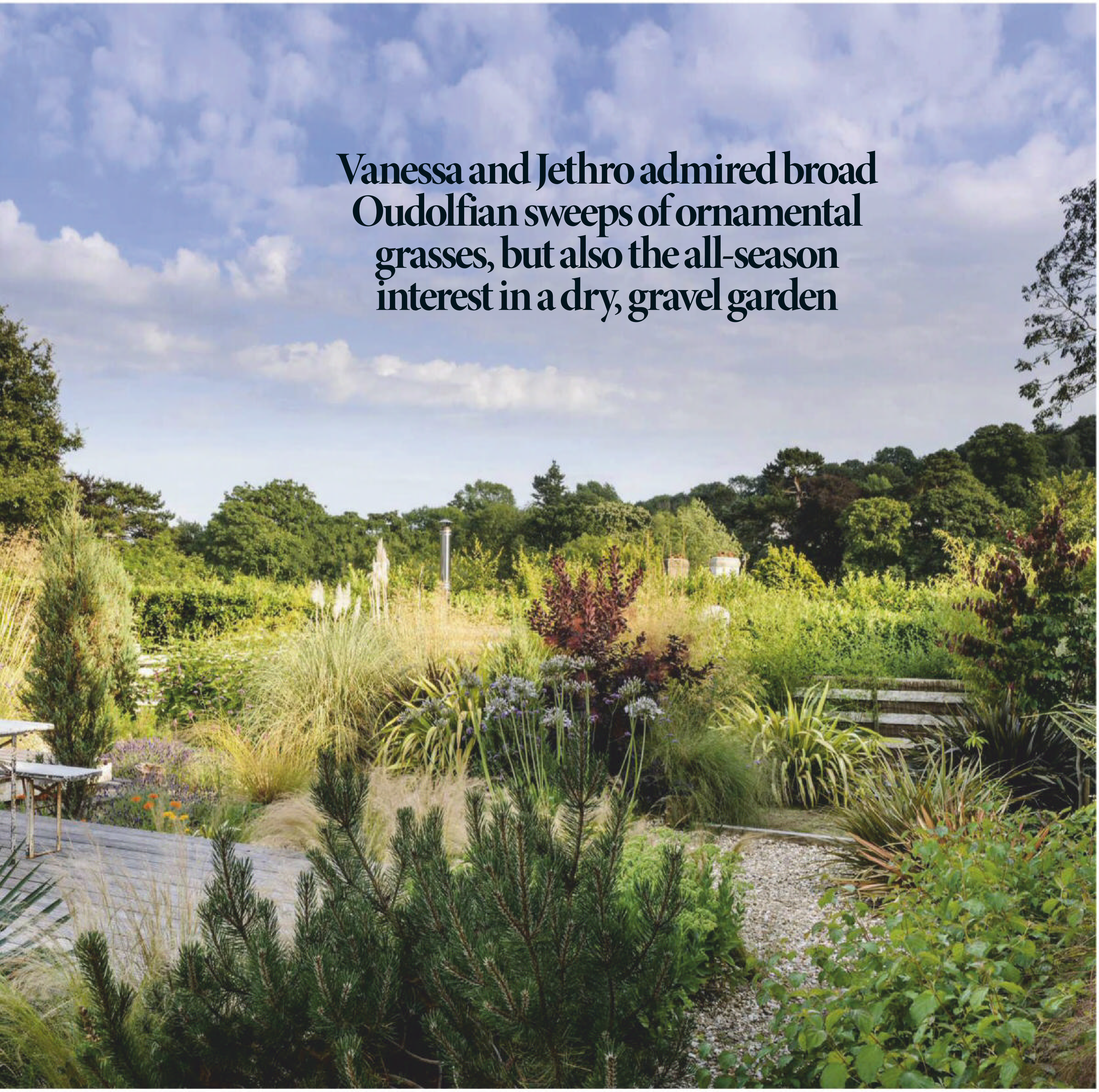


Above Splashes of colour provide seasonal highlights among the airy gravel planting. Drifts of architectural perennials, such as the blue African lily *Agapanthus* 'Windsor Grey', stand out against the soft buff tones of the feathery grass *Stipa tenuissima*.

▷ materials of the many original interior features, the couple were in no hurry to make radical changes to the house, but they did want to extend it to accommodate their family, in a way that would enhance the existing architecture and sit alongside a garden that would complement the clean lines of their house.

The couple already knew Lyme Regis-based garden designer Alice Meacham and to coincide with the second phase of their extension work asked her to come up with an initial concept plan that would associate the new extension to its surrounding space, and excavate out the sloping bank to the west of the house to create an outdoor living and dining area. A well-considered post-and-beam construction was employed to extended the architecture over a generous new paved terrace, with a long, wide step up to an unfussy wooden deck that steps down at the front into the gravel garden.

Popularised by Frank Lloyd Wright, post-and-beam construction, which requires fewer support beams, allows for dramatically open interior spaces and creates a smooth transition from house to garden. Utilitarian materials were selected, white for the paintwork of the house and curved retaining walls, while functional municipal paving slabs laid in a grid format form the terrace. The house is extensively glazed, ▷



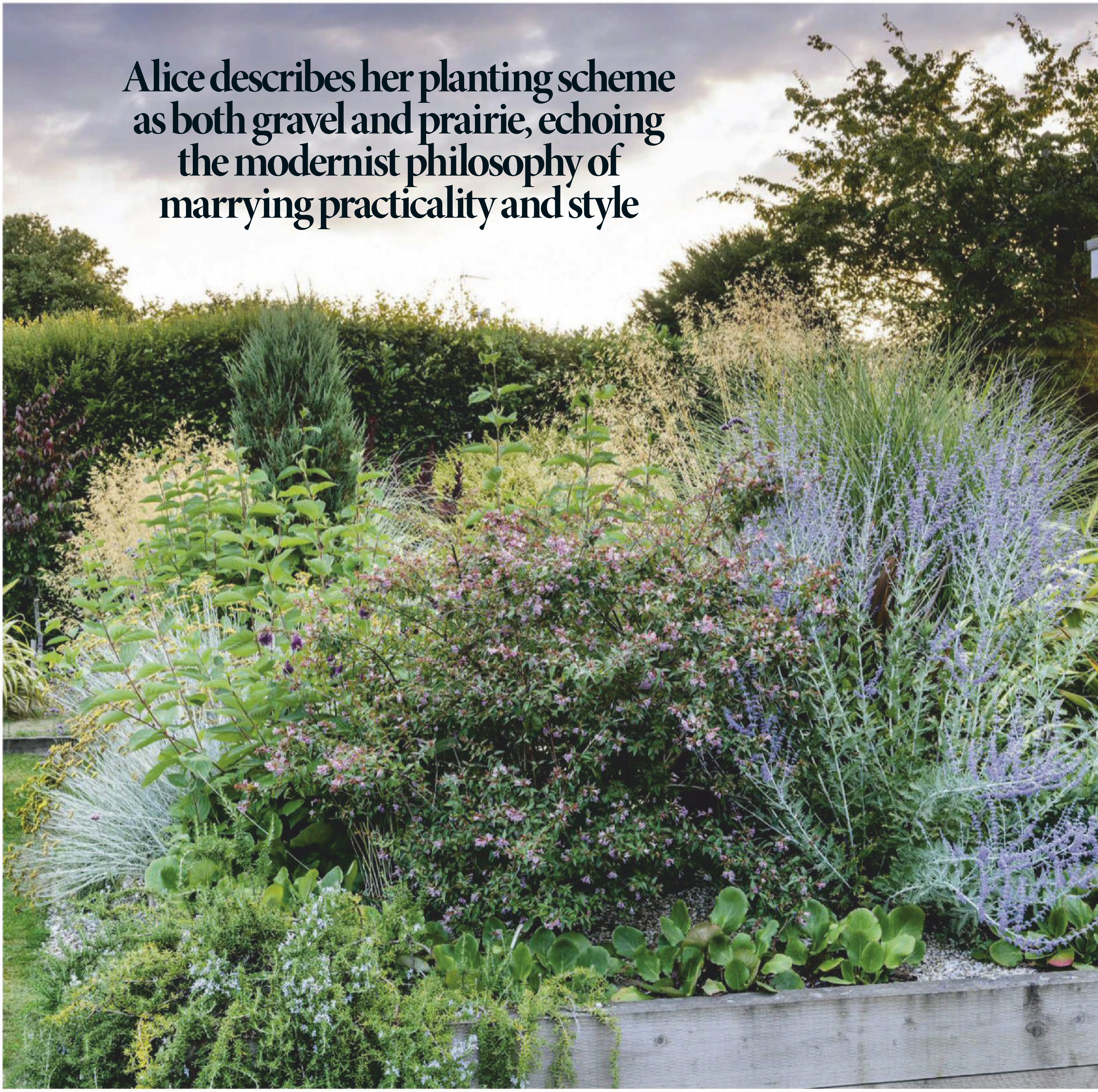
Vanessa and Jethro admired broad Oudolfian sweeps of ornamental grasses, but also the all-season interest in a dry, gravel garden

Contemporary conifers

Conifers are making a quiet comeback. Having shaken off their unfashionable associations they are enjoying an overdue renaissance. Unsurprising as they are largely hardy, disease and pest free and grow in a diverse range of habitats. Often evergreen, they are architectural plants with a broad colour spectrum of foliage. At the Garden House they fit neatly with the mid-century aesthetic and provide valuable evergreen interest and structure throughout the year. Alice positioned dwarf cultivars through the garden, giving each its own space, while also creating textural contrast by close associations with soft fluid grasses such as *Stipa tenuissima* and stiff strappy colourful phormiums. "In Vanessa's garden I have used *Juniperus squamata* 'Blue Carpet' to hang over the curved, white wall and soften where the step and decking meet, *Thuja plicata* 'Whipcord' next to the yucca to provide a complete contrast of leaf shape, and *Pinus mugo* sprouting out of the flinty gravel – as a nod to the dry, rocky slopes of more arid regions," explains Alice. Conifers bring balance and depth to the composition, providing sculptural, evergreen volume and groundcover in contrast to the seasonality of the shimmering voluminous summer grasses.

Above Shapely conifers, such as the columnar *Juniperus scopulorum* 'Skyrocket' and moundy *Pinus mugo*, furnish the garden with a sense of rhythm adding depth to the composition. The glowing foliage of *Cotinus* 'Flame' is a bold addition.

Alice describes her planting scheme as both gravel and prairie, echoing the modernist philosophy of marrying practicality and style



Above At the feet of a semi-evergreen *Abelia* 'Edward Goucher', oak landscape sleepers are abutted by a lower tier of planting. Rhizomatous *Bergenia* 'Autumn Magic' reflowers sporadically after its first flush, its leathery leaves bringing a blaze of autumn colour.

▷ expanses of single pane glass and sliding windows allow light to pour in and frame outside views, closely relating the interior space to the surrounding seasonal landscape.

Alice's design aesthetic uses an unusual and varied planting palette, underpinned by her understanding of what plant is likely to thrive where. Her clients favoured simplicity and required year-round interest. They admired broad Oudolfian sweeps of ornamental grasses, but also the informality and understated all-season interest inherent in Beth Chatto's dry, gravel garden. Alice proposed an informal gravel garden that runs like a dry riverbed around the terrace, but while the dry, breezy growing conditions of Beth Chatto's East Anglian garden benefit drought-tolerant Mediterranean plants, Alice was aware of the challenges posed by the retentive soil and high rainfall of this west Dorset location. Improved drainage was of paramount importance. Extensive land drains were installed and tonnes of gravel were mixed with imported topsoil and oak sleepers used to create raised beds at the front of the house, a solution that works well with the slope.

Alice describes her planting scheme as both gravel and prairie echoing the modernist philosophy of marrying practicality and style. Driven primarily by structure, loose drifts of statuesque grasses,

including *Miscanthus* and *Cortaderia*, thrive in the moist conditions, but are airy rather than overbearing. The gravel river bed is punctuated by intricate yet dense textural conifers and vibrant glossy phormiums and a yucca. Self-seeders, such as *Verbena bonariensis*, are kept in check by Alice's regular development and maintenance visits, and there is plenty of negative space between plants, which brings a sense of serenity and encourages wandering among the plants. The grasses and shrubs are a satisfying backdrop to the seasonal white, maroons and purples provided first by bee-friendly *Allium sphaerocephalon*, and later by *Agapanthus* cultivars and *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire'. Fleshy bergenias, brightly berried *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, low lavenders and prostrate rosemary and junipers provide a lower tier of planting that feathers the edges of the hard landscaping. Good taste prevails in this stylish and unpretentious modern garden. □

Above Surrounding the terrace is a gravel-filled central depression, or dry river bed, which also acts as the principal walkway through the gravel garden creating an atmospheric and serene meander past airy, metallic grasses and tactile conifers.

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Alice's work at **alicemeacham.co.uk**

HORTICULTURAL WHO’S WHO

CAROLINE JACKSON

The horticultural educator on how training can transform lives, and why she’s passionate about passing on her knowledge to the next generation of gardeners

WORDS JOHN HOYLAND PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

As a teenager growing up on a farm in Yorkshire, Caroline Jackson knew that she was always at her happiest when she was outdoors and that she would spend her life working on the land, surrounded by the plants and animals that she loved. As with many youthful dreams, life didn’t work out quite the way she had imagined, although Caroline has gone on to spend more than 30 years as a horticultural educator enthusing thousands of young people with her passion for plants and the natural world.

“My dad was a dairy farmer and I had an allergy to cow hair, otherwise I would have studied agriculture and become a farmer. When I was young in the early 1980s it felt like the only options were either working in a shop or training to be a teacher or a nurse and I didn’t fit into any of that. I was an outdoor girl, in love with Nature.”

Caroline decided to get some work experience prior to college and found a job working on a commercial nursery in Cheshire. “It was a fabulous place where I learned so much. We grew everything – chrysanthemums for cut flowers, bedding plants, there was even a *Saintpaulia* [African violet] house, which was like a little cave. It was a really good foundation in growing plants and it had me hooked immediately.” At the time every county had a college of horticulture and Caroline enrolled on to the Amenity Horticulture course at Yorkshire’s Askham Bryan College. “To be honest, I didn’t really know what the course was but I immediately loved it. It was full-time, three-year training. We were really, really privileged. We had a specialist for every subject, we weren’t expected to work massively on our own. We were taught daily from nine until five.”

> THERE IS SO MUCH ARTISTRY TO HORTICULTURE, IT IS NOT JUST ABOUT DIGGING A HOLE

After working as a gardener in Newcastle Parks and on the Windsor Estate, Caroline began to teach in the extra-mural department at Hadlow College. “It was mainly part-time courses and we all taught everything, which was sometimes hilarious, especially me trying to show strapping lads how to drive a tractor, which I was completely rubbish at.”

Those early days at Hadlow showed Caroline the importance of training and lit in her a passion for passing on her knowledge and enthusing young people. “The level of teaching was wonderful and most staff had worked in the industry for a long time – they all knew so much and were passionate about passing things on. I saw how inspiring first-class teaching could be to young people.” Over the next 30 years she taught students from entry level to degree level and it is clear that she was an ardent and energetic teacher.

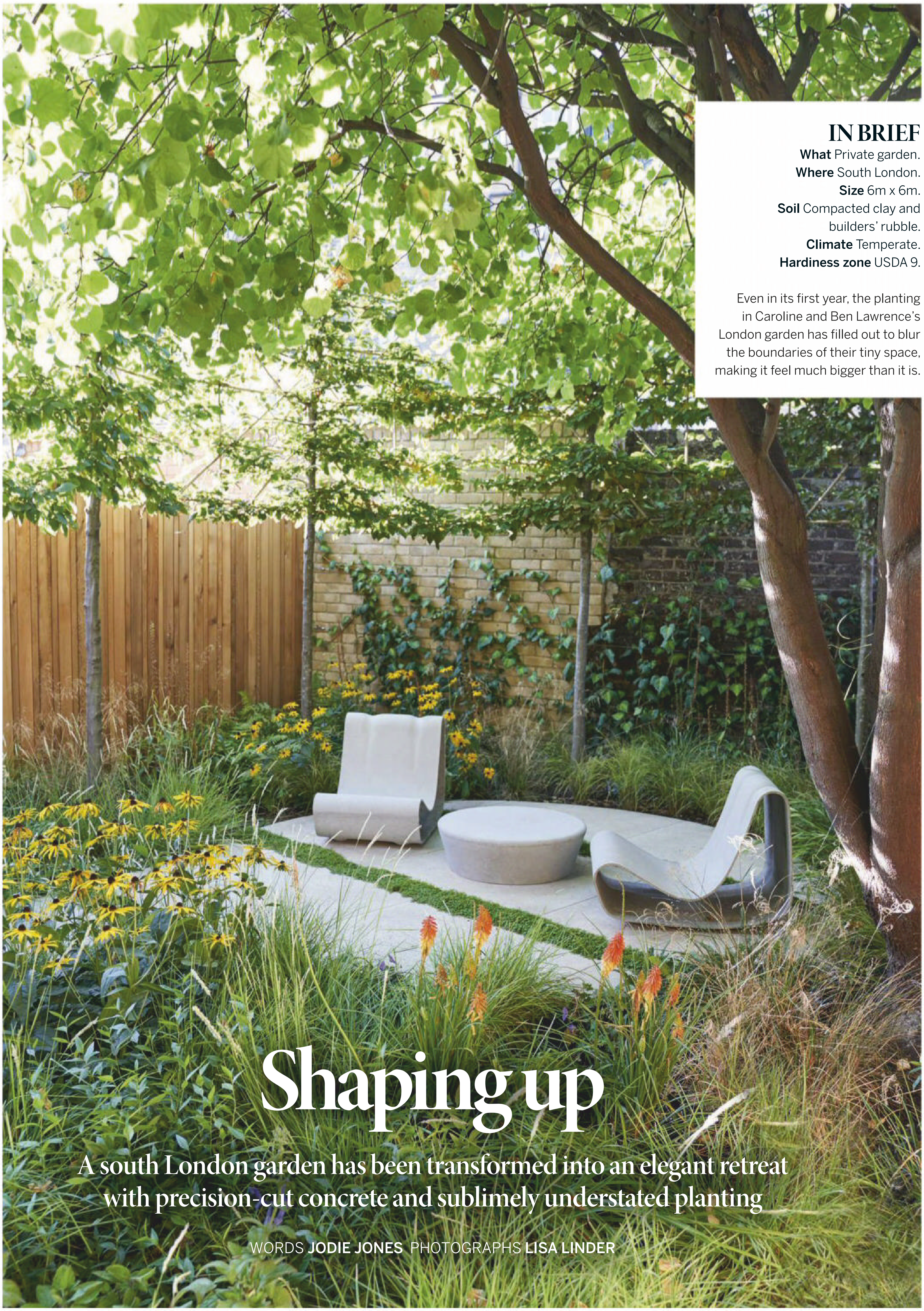
Caroline is now a freelance educator and works with the students at RHS Garden Wisley. “Teaching these young people is great because they are all so keen and interested. I also learn so much from them because there is always a student who has a passion for a particular plant and knows far more than I do about it.” The RHS Practical Diploma and similar schemes at the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, and other botanic gardens are the pinnacle of horticultural training and Caroline is keen to encourage young people to apply to them. “Many ordinary young people from disadvantaged areas, don’t realise that these places are open to them. They just have to be really interested. They should be encouraged to apply.”

How to motivate young people to enter horticulture, an industry where wages are low and the work is physically demanding, is an issue that concerns Caroline. “The first problem is that it is hard for young people to realise what a diverse career it is. It is not just pushing a wheelbarrow and sweeping leaves.” Colleges have a role to play in this. “It bugs me when colleges sell their courses as just gardening. Horticulture is so much more. There is so much technicality and so much artistry. When you meet an experienced gardener, it is staggering the breadth of their knowledge about so many things. It is not just about digging a hole. We need to find ways to communicate that to kids.”

When not teaching students, Caroline can be found canoeing the waterways of Kent or mentoring the head gardeners of gardens by landscape architect Marian Boswall. Imparting horticultural knowledge, whether to old hands or a new generation, is her passion. “I love teaching and what I like best is to watch people learn their plants. There is a tipping point with students where they walk in a park or around a garden and they suddenly realise that they know more of the plants than they don’t know. And from that point they don’t look at the world in the same way ever again. It is transformational. They now know that they can recognise and understand the natural world. And that is a great gift to be able to give.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about training for a career in horticulture at **horticulture.org.uk/grow-careers**



Shaping up

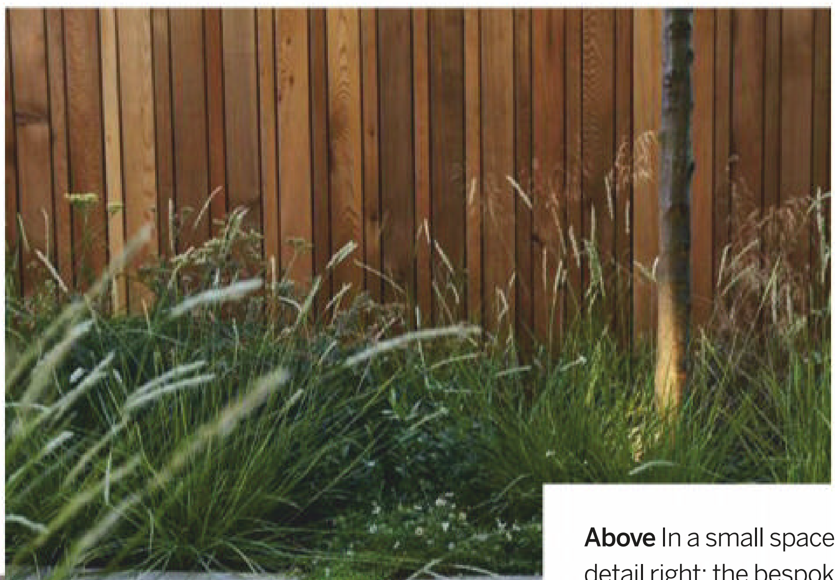
A south London garden has been transformed into an elegant retreat with precision-cut concrete and sublimely understated planting

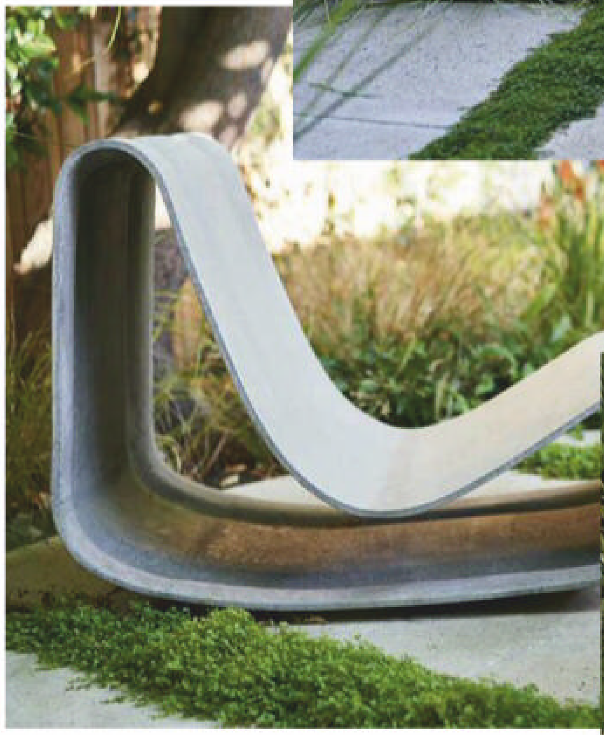
WORDS **JODIE JONES** PHOTOGRAPHS **LISA LINDER**

IN BRIEF

What Private garden.
Where South London.
Size 6m x 6m.
Soil Compacted clay and builders' rubble.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

Even in its first year, the planting in Caroline and Ben Lawrence's London garden has filled out to blur the boundaries of their tiny space, making it feel much bigger than it is.





Above In a small space it is important to get every detail right; the bespoke fence made from two different widths of chamfered boards in red cedar with precise 6mm gaps between battens.

Left Created by Swiss designer Willy Guhl in 1954, the concrete Loop chair is a contemporary classic that doubles here as sculpture and seating.

Below The concrete slabs were carefully spaced to create planting pockets for cushiony mounds of *Soleirolia soleirolii*, which is kept close trimmed to curtail its invasive habit.

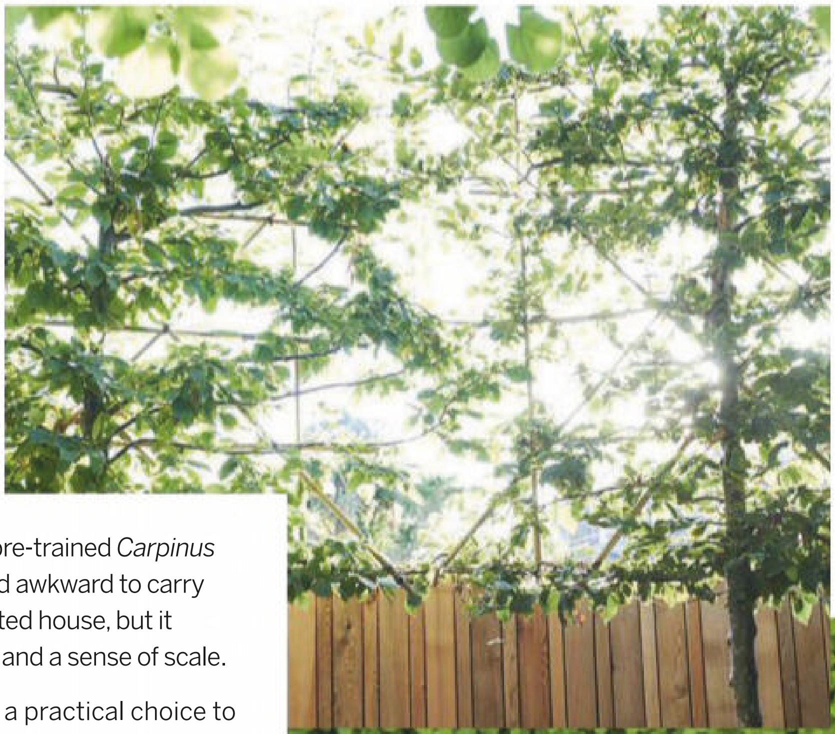
When Caroline and Ben Lawrence extended their south London terraced house into the garden they gave one specific instruction to their builders. "We asked them to take care of the tree," says Caroline. "And to be fair, they did look after it very well. Unfortunately, the rest of the garden looked like a landfill site by the time they had finished."

With double-height glass stretching across the width of the ground-floor extension and their new upstairs study looking out over the garden, they leapt at a friend's suggestion to contact Sheila Jack. After decades working in magazine design, including as art director of American *Vogue*, in recent years Sheila has built a reputation for designing elegant, carefully judged, contemporary gardens.

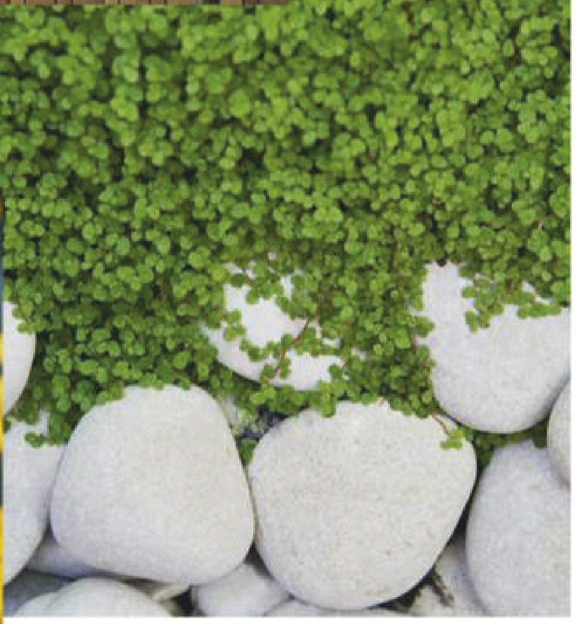
"I do a lot of work in London," says Sheila. "There was a lot of rubble left from the renovation work, but when I saw that gorgeous tree I knew we could make a great garden. You've got to work with what is there, and the *Cercis* – possibly *C. siliquastrum* – needed a spot of crown lifting and general tidying up, but it formed the focal point of the design and has really elevated the look of the whole garden."

Caroline and Ben both work in the film industry, which can take them away from home for long periods, so they asked for a low-maintenance garden that would be a pleasure to look down on from their shared study and provide a quiet, protected space for downtime. "Caroline also mentioned curves, because the extension was very angular, and Ben really wanted poured concrete. I quickly came up with the idea of the curved hornbeam stilt hedge, to screen out neighbouring windows, and everything fell into place from there," says Sheila.

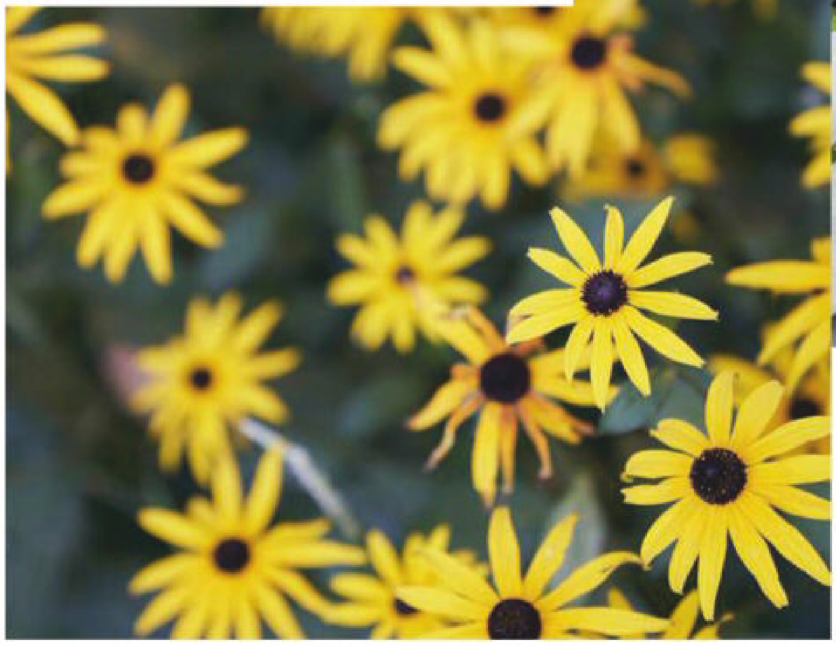
Today, looking out from the kitchen, the garden seems far larger than its 6m by 6m reality. The plate glass windows are filled with a swaying mass of meadow-chic planting, a canopy of branches, ▷



Above The stilt hedge of pre-trained *Carpinus betulus* was expensive and awkward to carry through the newly renovated house, but it created an instant screen and a sense of scale.



Right Pale pebbles were a practical choice to fill an existing French drain next to the house, but also referenced the curves of the overall design in this rectilinear space.



Below Clumps of *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' are spaced around the garden, producing masses of golden daisies.

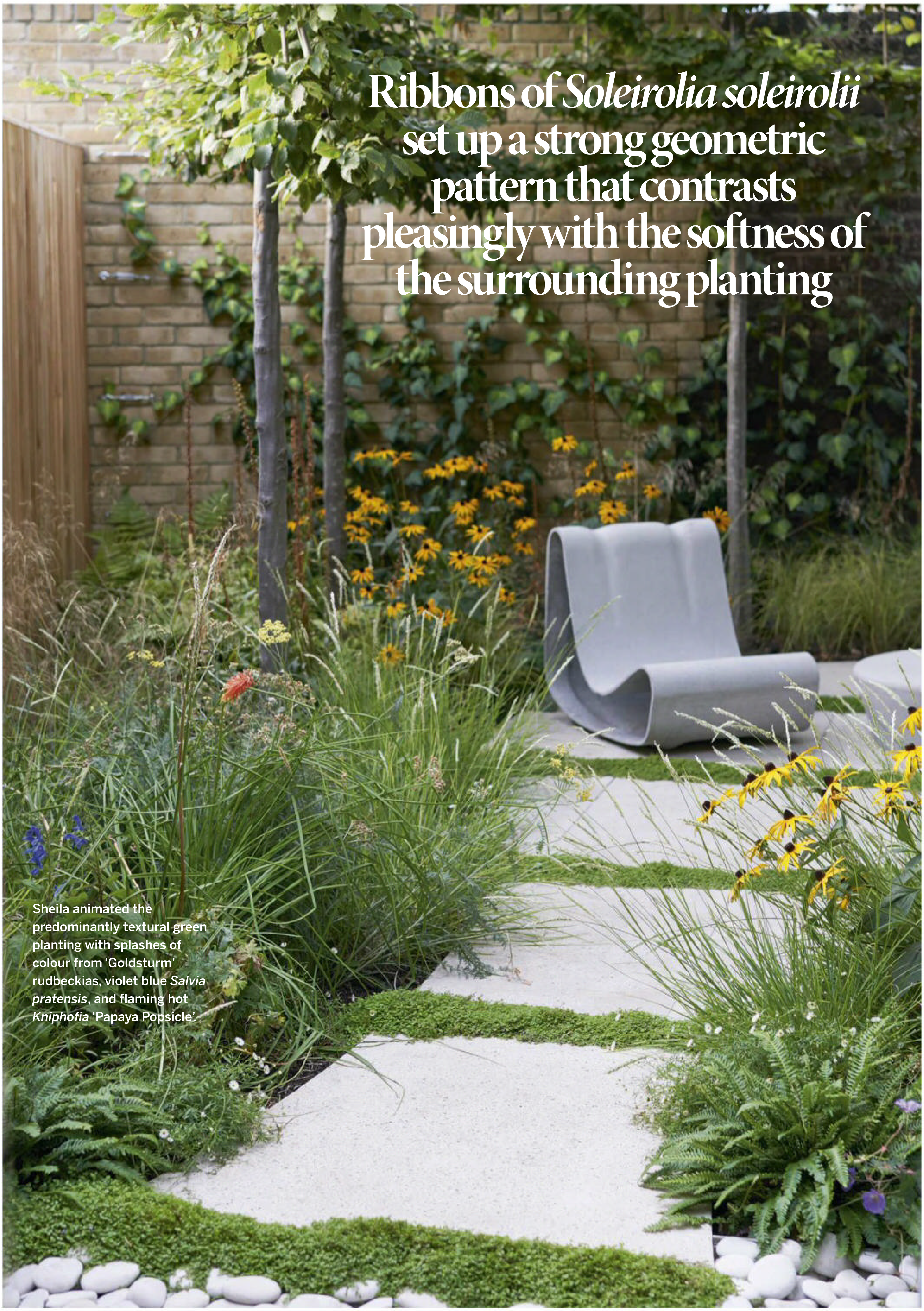
▷ and a crisp concrete path that curls round to form a circular terrace where a pair of classic 1950s Loop chairs are pulled up alongside a low occasional table. "We were going for low input, high impact," says Sheila. "Ben initially wanted poured concrete, but that would have overstretched the budget, so instead I used large-format Schellevis paving, which is a cost-effective alternative. The slabs were precision cut off site, to avoid mess, and then laid to align with the angle of the extension."

Ribbons of *Soleirolia soleirolii* make a feature of the division between the separate slabs, setting up a strong geometric pattern that contrasts pleasingly with the softness of the surrounding planting, in which grasses and ferns predominate. "We used grasses that tolerate a bit of shade, including *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldtau', *Sesleria autumnalis* and russet-tinged *Anemanthele lessoniana*. Through this I wove splashes of orange *Achillea* 'Terracotta' and *Kniphofia* 'Papaya Popsicle', picking up the colour of a bold panel in the extension. There are also Ballerina tulips for the spring, and golden yellow *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' which carries on into autumn."

Intense violet-blue *Geranium* Rozanne (= 'Gerwat') and *Salvia pratensis* provide a complementary colour contrast, and the rather tatty brick wall at the end of the garden is rapidly disappearing under a scrambling veil of *Hedera colchica* 'Sulphur Heart' and scented *Trachelospermum jasminoides*.

Looking out over her garden just a year after work ended, Caroline is delighted. "I don't think I expected it to be quite so lush. Somehow it is neat and wild all at the same time. It looks amazing from the study window upstairs and it is the perfect place to sit, contemplate, or read a book. After everything that has happened in the world recently, we are incredibly grateful to have it." ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Sheila's work at **sheilajack.com**



Ribbons of *Soleirolia soleirolii* set up a strong geometric pattern that contrasts pleasingly with the softness of the surrounding planting

Sheila animated the predominantly textural green planting with splashes of colour from 'Goldsturm' rudbeckias, violet blue *Salvia pratensis*, and flaming hot *Kniphofia* 'Papaya Popsicle'.

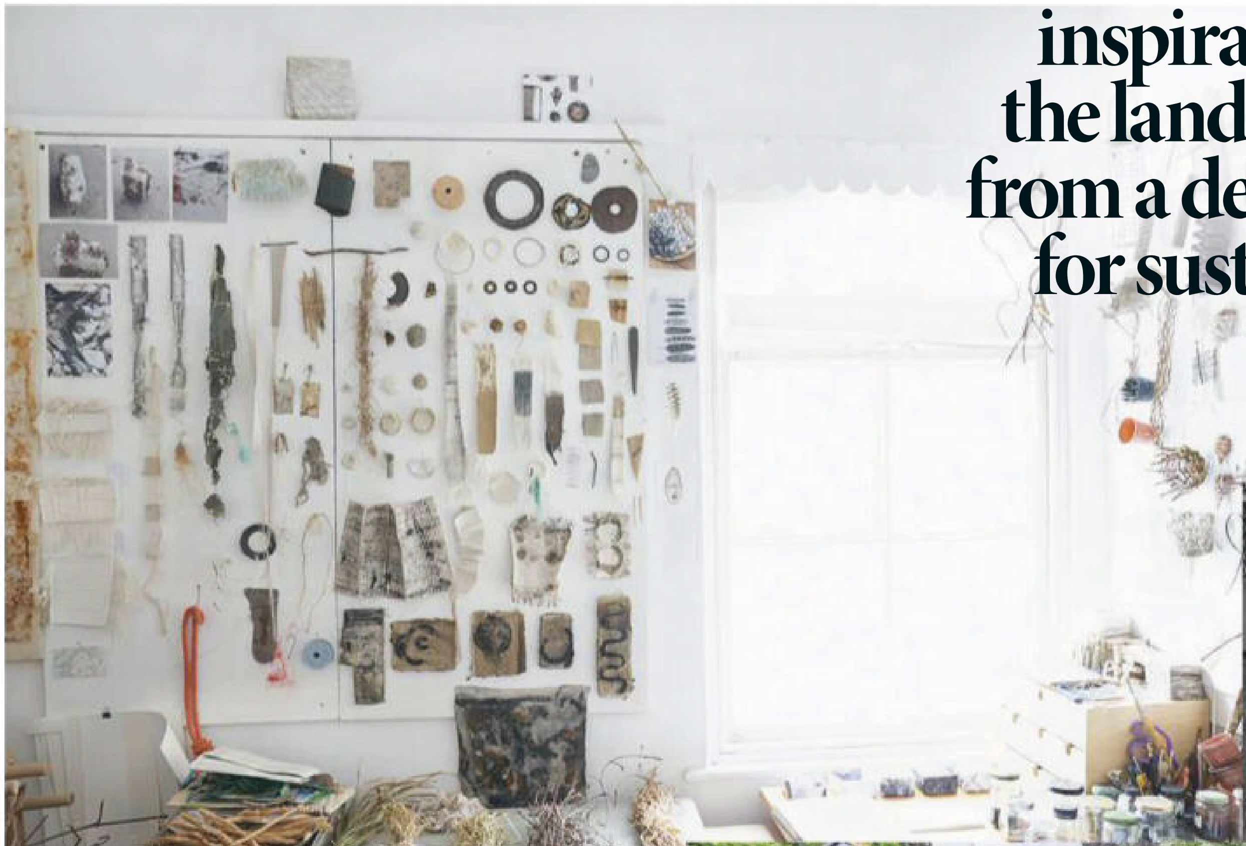
Beech Leaf
Sept 2018
Dandelion Root
Jan 2019
Beech
Nov 2017
Elderberry
Jan 2019
Peach wood + leaf
April 2019
Peach Wood
June 2018
Raspberry leaf
Aug 2018
Artichoke Leaf
Oct 2018
Viola flowers + Lime
June 2019
Red Sunflower (flowers dried)
June 2019
Apple wood + Iron
March 2019
Viola flowers
June 2019
Tagetes (dried) + Alum
June 2019
Apple Branch wood + leaf + iron
May 2020
Woad Seeds
May 2020
Blackcurrant wood + iron
March 2019
Globe Artichoke + iron + vin
June 2020
Woad Seeds + vin + salt + GA
May 2020
Pear Wood + iron
Nettle + copper pipe + vin + salt + GA
May 2020

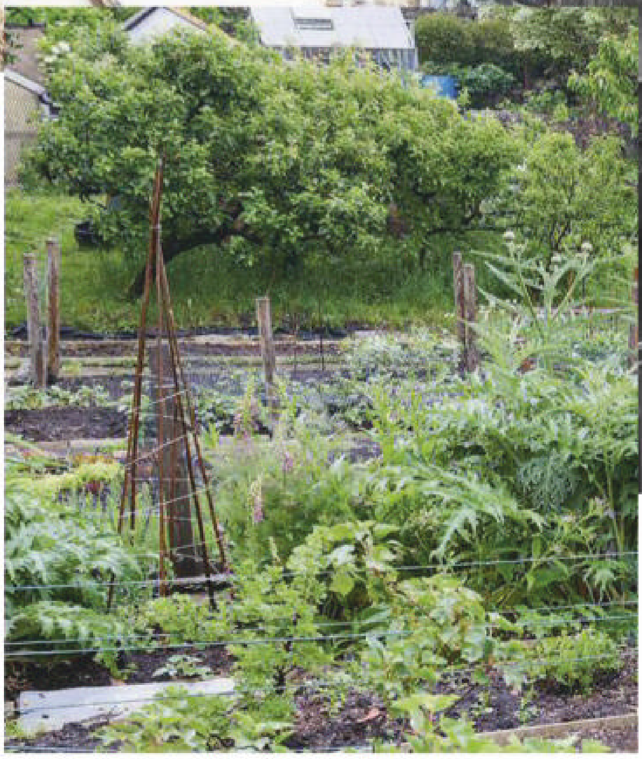
Material world

Nothing is wasted on artist Alice Fox's allotment – flax, dandelion stems, even old paper are woven into rope; anything organic is distilled into ink

WORDS **RACHEL SEATON-LUCAS** PHOTOGRAPHS **LISA LINDER**

Alice draws her inspiration from the landscape and from a deep feeling for sustainability





Above Alice's studio wall, where she pins a collection of samples and experiments.

Right Gooseberries, artichokes and potatoes grow alongside flax on Alice's allotment, Plot 105. Behind the apple trees are her three sheds.

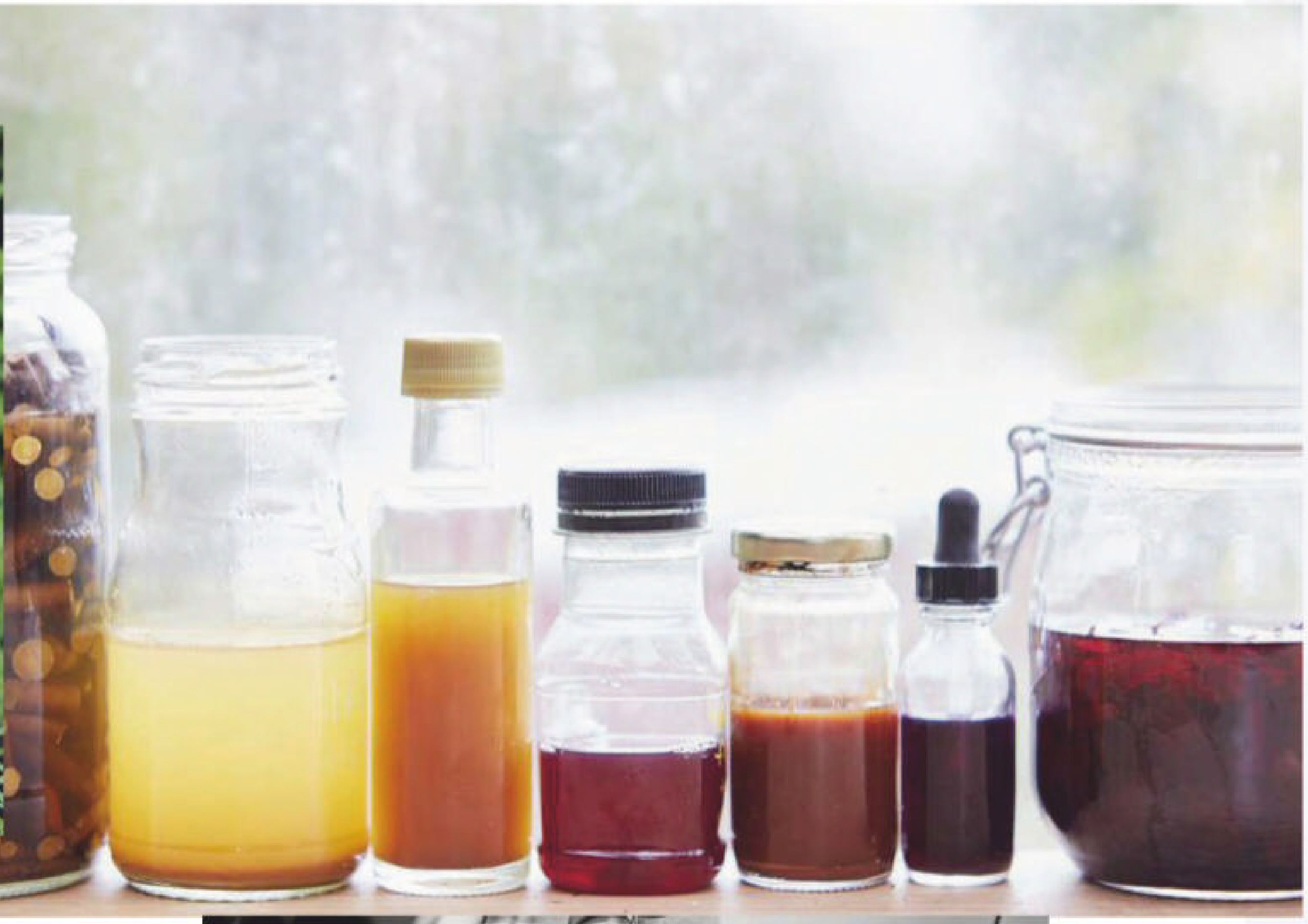
Far right Alice holds some of last year's flax, processed into fibre ready to spin.

Facing page Test cards for Alice's ink. Made from cultivated and gathered plants, the inks record the year in an infinite variety of subtle, organic colour washes.

In a shed on her West Yorkshire allotment, artist Alice Fox sits and paints a fallen apple branch, a victim of the high winds and dry weather that have accompanied this strangest of springs. The shed (one of three on her plot) pre-dates Alice's time here and is cobbled together with chicken wire windows and a roof that is part corrugated plastic, letting in good light. She paints with nettle ink, made from the plants that grew beneath her apple trees last year. The nettles are shooting up again now, as are the dandelions that line the path to her plot, and Alice watches them both, assessing the right time to make her harvest.

Alice makes objects that are endlessly tactile: a satisfyingly shaped stone dug from a vegetable bed fits snugly into a glossy, hat-like vessel made of braided dandelion stems; a damaged leaf found on a walk in her local woods is 'darned', the hole mended with meticulous cotton stitching; broken nut shells are patched with tiny, naturally dyed woven squares of thread; palm-sized baskets are crafted from hairy rush fibres or arid paper yarn; even blue plastic twine found on a beach is woven into delicate, gall-like structures. Each piece is inviting to the touch – like pottery they demand to be handled, turned over, examined at close quarters.

Alice draws her inspiration from the landscape and from a deep feeling for sustainability. She spent her childhood holidays on the west coast of Scotland, exploring and coming to love the natural world in all its guises. This affinity led her to study physical geography at university, then to work surveying otters in Yorkshire. However, after the birth of her second child she changed course, withdrawing from the natural sciences as she immersed herself in making and art. Alice completed a second degree in textiles, but her connection with nature persisted and, as she began working as an artist, she made a conscious decision to be as self-sufficient as possible. She garners her materials wherever she can and 'found' objects often spark an idea: discarded paper found in a shed full of clutter on her allotment is transformed into yarn, a creamily pale limpet shell spied on a beach is stitched with silk and cotton; a rusty washer discarded on the pavement prompts a series of prints. The material objects that Alice discerns in the natural world act as a tangible link to a specific time ▷



Above Alice grows, harvests and processes flax (*Linum usitatissimum*) by hand for her tactile woven objects.

Top right Plant inks in the making or waiting to be used in her allotment shed, including apple wood prunings, far left.

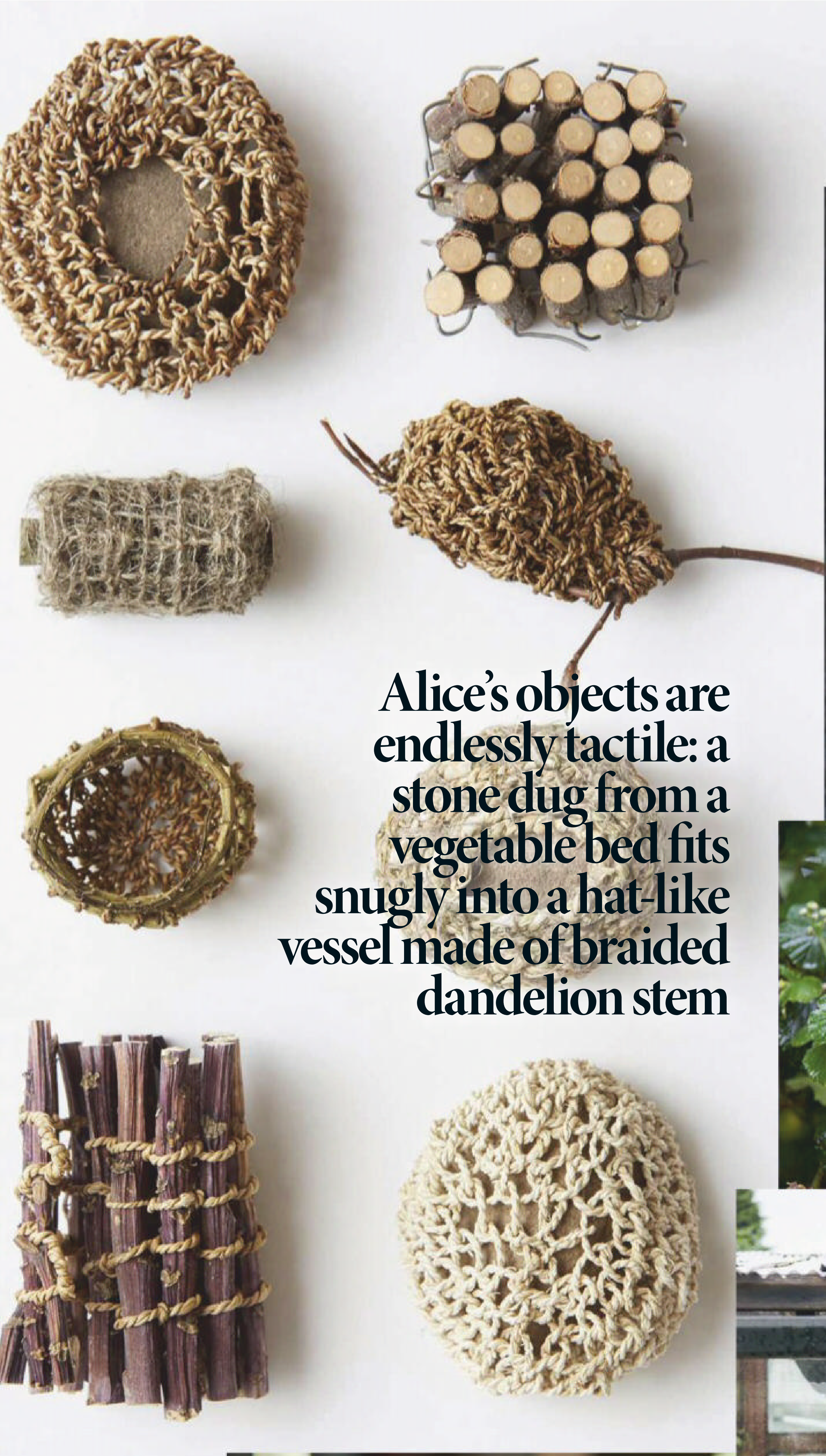
Right Alice sketches a bramble before stripping the stem of its bark fibre and using the leaves to make ink and botanical contact prints.

▷ and place. They prompt a process of 'imaginative exploration' and technical experimentation that allows her creative response to blossom.

Nearly three years ago Alice took on her allotment, Plot 105, as the focus for her MA in Creative Practice. Here her ability to create her own materials flourished. Among common fruit and vegetable crops, she grows flax from seed – harvesting, rippling, retting, scutching and combing before eventually spinning the fibres into thread. Through investigation and manipulation she learns about the properties of her medium, tests boundaries and capabilities, then records her findings. Leaves from a failed garlic crop, dandelion stems and daffodil foliage are twined into supple rope. Weedings and prunings are used to make botanical contact prints, where plants are folded into an envelope of paper, clamped and steamed to leave an impression, sometimes fleeting, on the paper. She made these prints every week for a year and kept a record in 52 hand-bound notebooks. Fragments of paper, plastic, wood, ceramic and metal found on the allotment are re-imagined as new 'constructed forms'. Anything at all organic is used for ink-making. Nothing goes to waste. Her experiments with plant inks led to a mapping of the plants on her allotment in a clear grid of colour-washed squares, each ink made from a different plant on the plot and mapped to the plant's location. The colours are soft, subtle and alluring, drawing you in, leaving one intrigued about the plant that produced such beauty.

When the time comes for Alice to leave her plot, the apple branch goes too. At home she breaks the wood into pieces and sets it to simmer in a pot of water on the stove. She is extracting the tannins to make more ink. The method dates from medieval times when tannin-rich oak galls were ground to a powder and steeped in water, after which gum arabic and copperas (iron sulphate) were added for permanence and richness of colour. Alice will simmer the pieces for several hours, reducing the liquid to intensify the tincture. The process encapsulates Alice's art: she creates tangible work from something that others would dismiss and in so doing she – quite literally in this case – distils the essence of her materials. The next day she returns to her allotment with the apple-wood ink ready to be put to use in her next creation. And so her cycle of considered organic making begins again. □

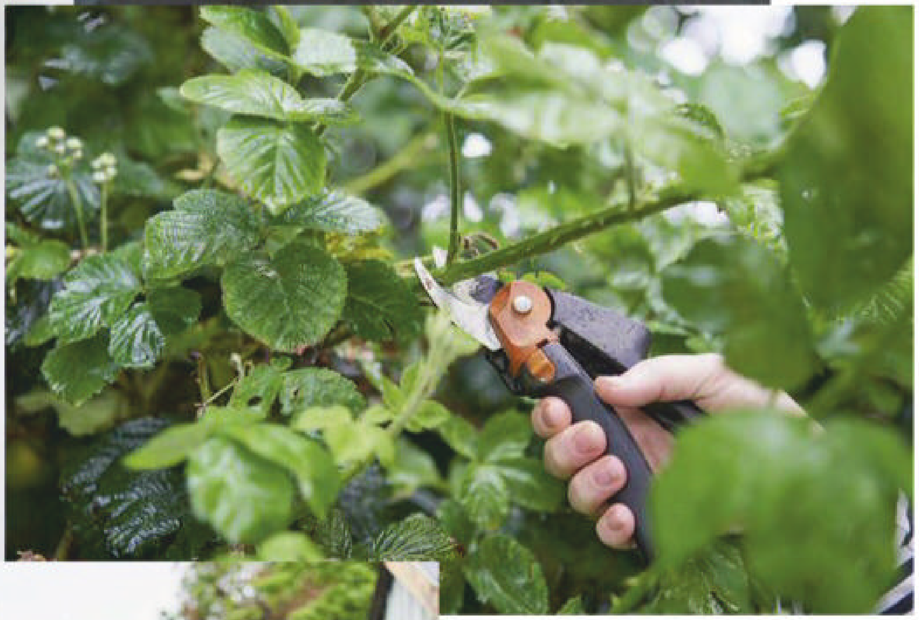
USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Alice's work at **alicefox.co.uk**

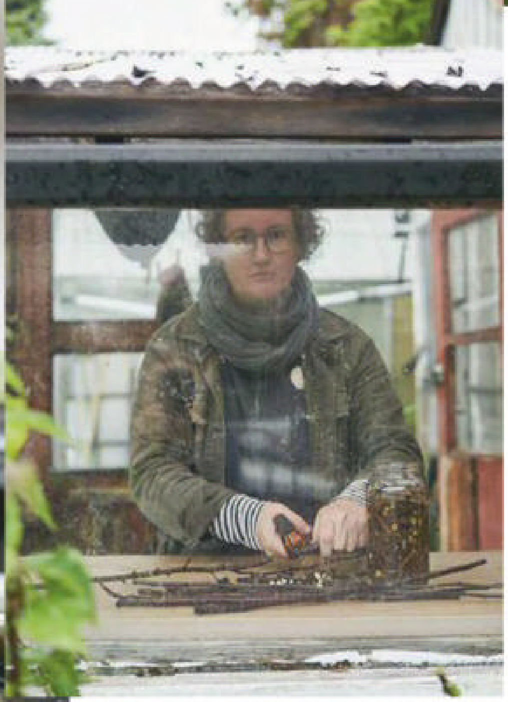


> Alice's objects are endlessly tactile: a stone dug from a vegetable bed fits snugly into a hat-like vessel made of braided dandelion stem

This image *Eschscholzia* petals waiting to be put to use in botanical contact printing.

Left A selection of Alice's works made from, variously: daffodil leaves, apple wood, found wire, knotted flax, bramble stem and sweetcorn husk, all spun or corded into tactile rope, then woven into organic forms.



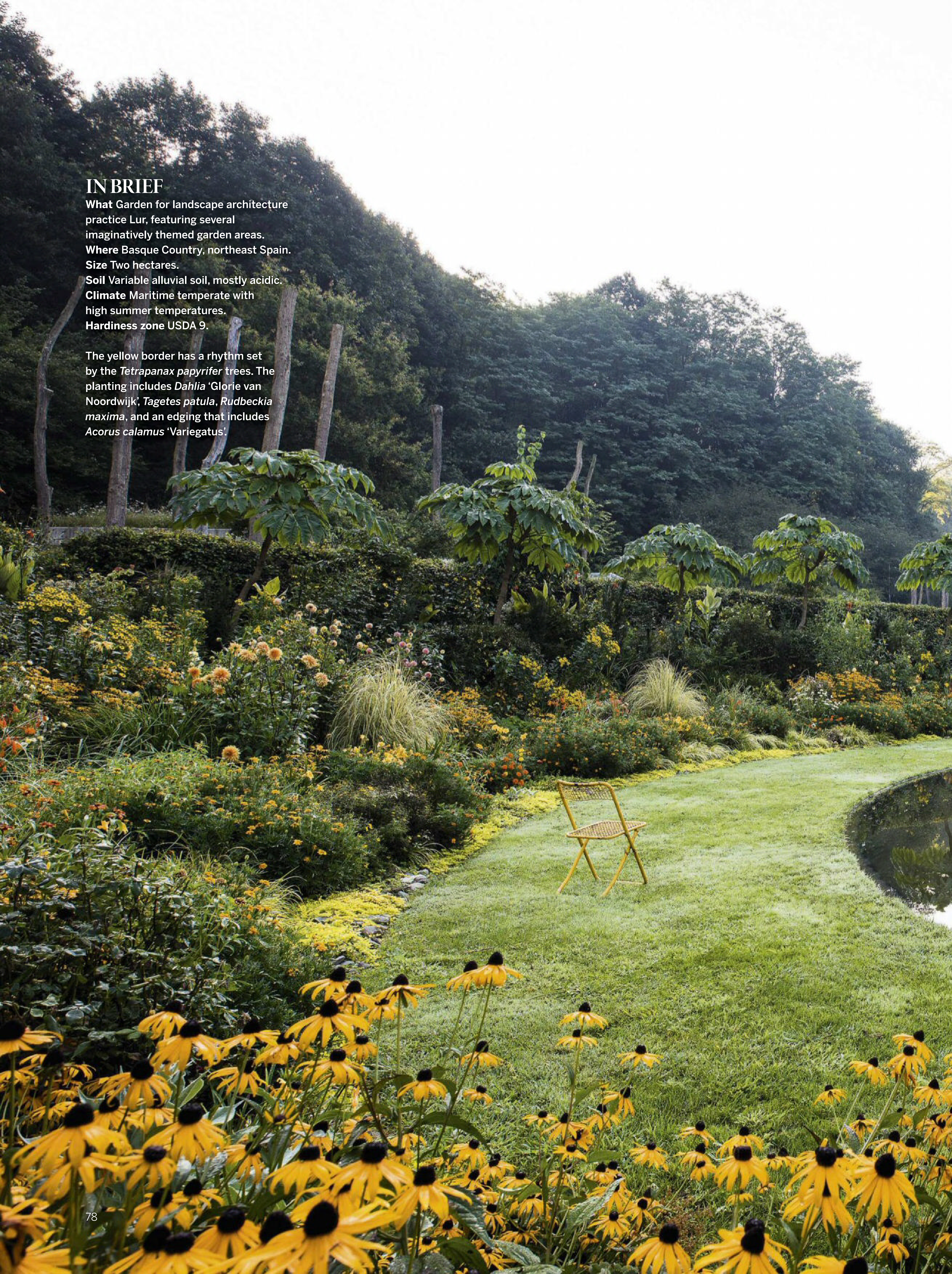


Above Harvesting bramble stems for their fibre and ink-making capabilities.

Left Alice cuts up apple wood prunings to use in ink making.

Far left Plant inks made from woad seed, tagetes flowers, red onion, peach wood and dried buddleja flowers. Those made from petals are kept out of direct sunlight as they are less stable over time.

Seed + Salt
Red onion + Iron
Peach wood ink June 2018
Dried buddleja + ... salt



IN BRIEF

What Garden for landscape architecture practice Lur, featuring several imaginatively themed garden areas.
Where Basque Country, northeast Spain.
Size Two hectares.
Soil Variable alluvial soil, mostly acidic.
Climate Maritime temperate with high summer temperatures.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

The yellow border has a rhythm set by the *Tetrapanax papyrifer* trees. The planting includes *Dahlia* 'Glorie van Noordwijk', *Tagetes patula*, *Rudbeckia maxima*, and an edging that includes *Acorus calamus* 'Variegatus'.

Embryonic ideas

The garden of Spanish landscape architecture practice Lur, acts as a test bed for their exciting approach to planting

WORDS NOEL KINGSBURY PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

A garden that is a challenge to get to creates a sense of anticipation and heightened awareness at the final arrival, and negotiating the narrow lanes of the wooded valleys south of San Sebastián in the Spanish Basque Country to reach this particular garden certainly generates a sense of intrigue. There is so much that is familiar – the oaks and the surrounding hills mean this garden could easily be in Wales – and an initial overview of the plant selection is reminiscent of many a British garden. But, here it is as if someone has taken a range of familiar plants and arranged them in a way that is completely new. It is quite extraordinarily refreshing, and, one of the most stimulating gardens I have ever set foot in. Welcome to Lur, which means earth in Basque.

Lur is not just a garden, it is also the landscape architecture practice of Iñigo Segurola Arregui and his partner Juan Iriarte Aguirrezabal, who have been working together making gardens in the Basque Country for many years while using the garden around their studio as a test bed for many of their ideas. "We wanted to use it for research," says Iñigo, and indeed there is something of a feeling of many things being tried out: a green roof, a meadow, colour combinations. But there is also a powerful energy and highly inventive creativity. All enclosed in the embrace of a valley, the sides clothed in a mixture of oak woodland and pasture.

The design of the garden was inspired by the shape of the egg. As soon as you arrive in the garden you might first notice *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum' growing in egg-shaped cement blocks in the area opposite the studio. Then there are egg-shaped blocks of unmown grass in the area known as the *Pradera* (or meadow) to one side, and the shape is repeated in many of the other areas of the garden.

"We multiplied the ovoid shape in a fractal way," says Iñigo, "using it at different scales to accommodate the various spaces of the garden, each one defined by beech hedges. At the same time, some yews were trimmed like big standing eggs." Exploring the garden is like a journey through an organic labyrinth with a series of experiences defined by the clear theme in each space. Some are themed by colour, or foliage, or some other clear focus, such as the one filled with primitive plants – what is known as the Jurassic Garden.

If there is a familiarity to some aspects of this garden it may be down to the pair's links with the UK. Iñigo came here in his teens to study English, and was inspired by the cottage gardens he visited. In particular he cites the gardens of Sissinghurst in Kent and, across the Channel, Le Jardin Plume in Normandy as gardens that have a made a big impact on his thinking. "I wanted to be a landscape architect before I knew what one was," he says. Later he went on to study landscape architecture in Edinburgh, as did Juan, albeit at different universities.

With this background in mind, Lur makes sense as a British garden with a radically different approach to line – curved rather than geometric. The big, open *Pradera* can be seen as a lawn, an empty green space, away from the intensity of much of the planting. Unlike a traditional meadow much of the grass is mown, with eggs (that shape again) of long grass, although as Juan explains, these areas don't produce many wildflowers. "It is too lush and the growing season is too good for the grass, but *Lythrum salicaria* has been successful," he says.

Creating colour-themed gardens or borders was a big part of British gardening in the 1990s, but then became unfashionable, so it is good to see it being revisited here, and especially on such an ambitious scale. The *Pradera* leads into what is known as the Mirror Garden, where an oval pool, both large and deep enough to swim in, is backed by a border dominated by yellow flowers and variegated foliage. Beyond this are other smaller gardens, before the planting segues off into the woods. Innovative transitions are another distinctive part of this garden. Another is seen near the studio where a pastel-hued perennial border bleeds into it the bark mulch groundcover, with odd plants or small groups on their own, so the border lacks a clear edge, as if plants are escaping.

On the other side of the *Pradera*, there are more enclosed areas, including a White Garden although with its dramatically positioned rocks and grasses it is a world away from the garden famously created by Vita Sackville-West at Sissinghurst. "White is the easiest colour to work with. I love white," says Iñigo. Alongside his White Garden – essentially two gardens, one concentrating largely on planting the other on structure – Iñigo has created a White Hydrangea Garden, where the likes of *Hydrangea quercifolia* and *H. arborescens* 'Annabelle', are the leading players among a chorus of soft-white planting. This along with the Coloured Hydrangea Garden forms a large area that Iñigo has dubbed the *dignifiquemos a la hortensia*, or dignification of the hydrangea, in which he hopes to dispel the plant's kitsch associations.

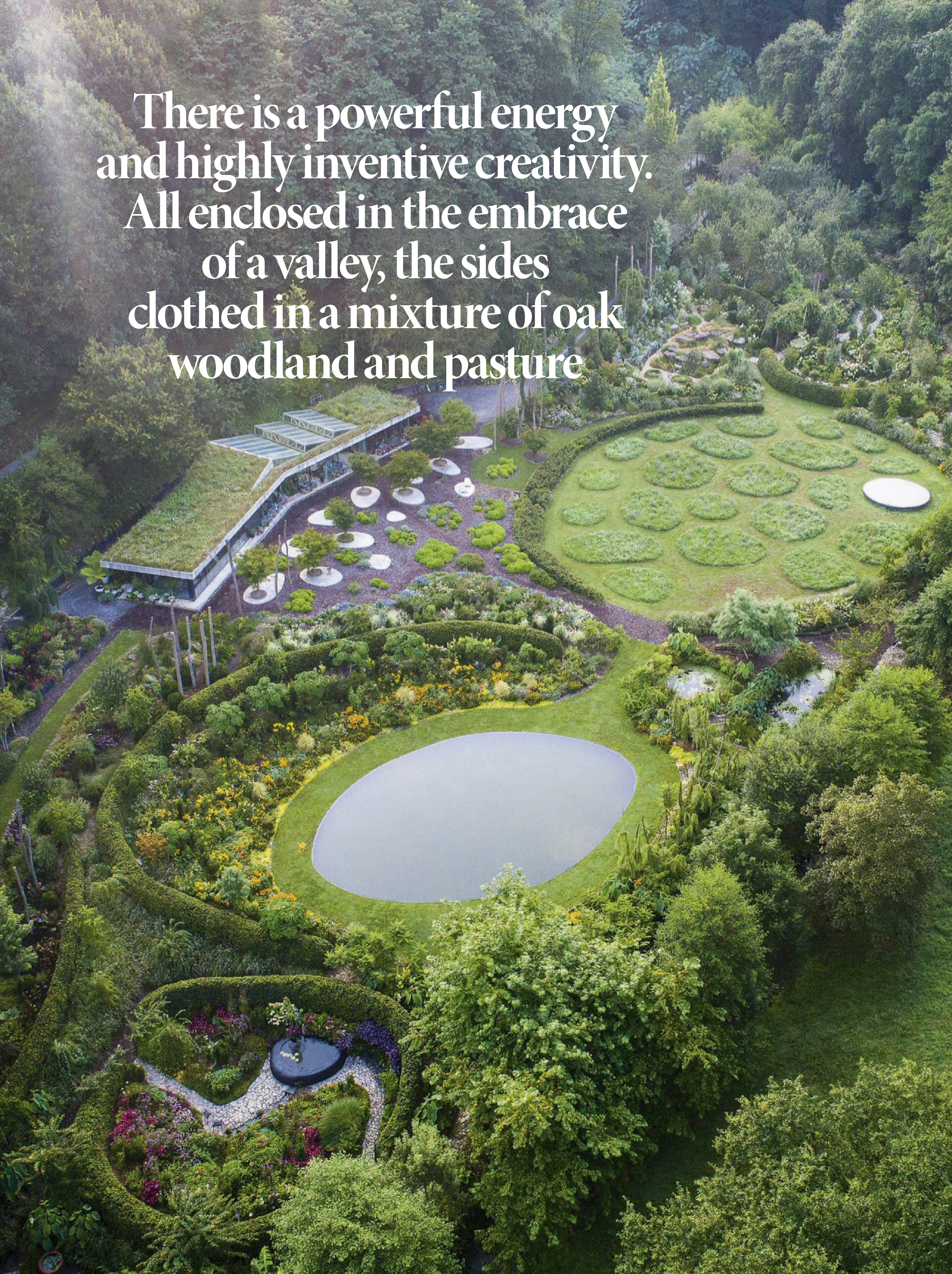
At the heart of this garden is a desire to rethink and reframe many of the most popular garden ideas. Spanish culture is remarkably inventive, and it is refreshing to see this inventiveness turned to gardens. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Iñigo and Juan's work at **lurpaisajistak.com**

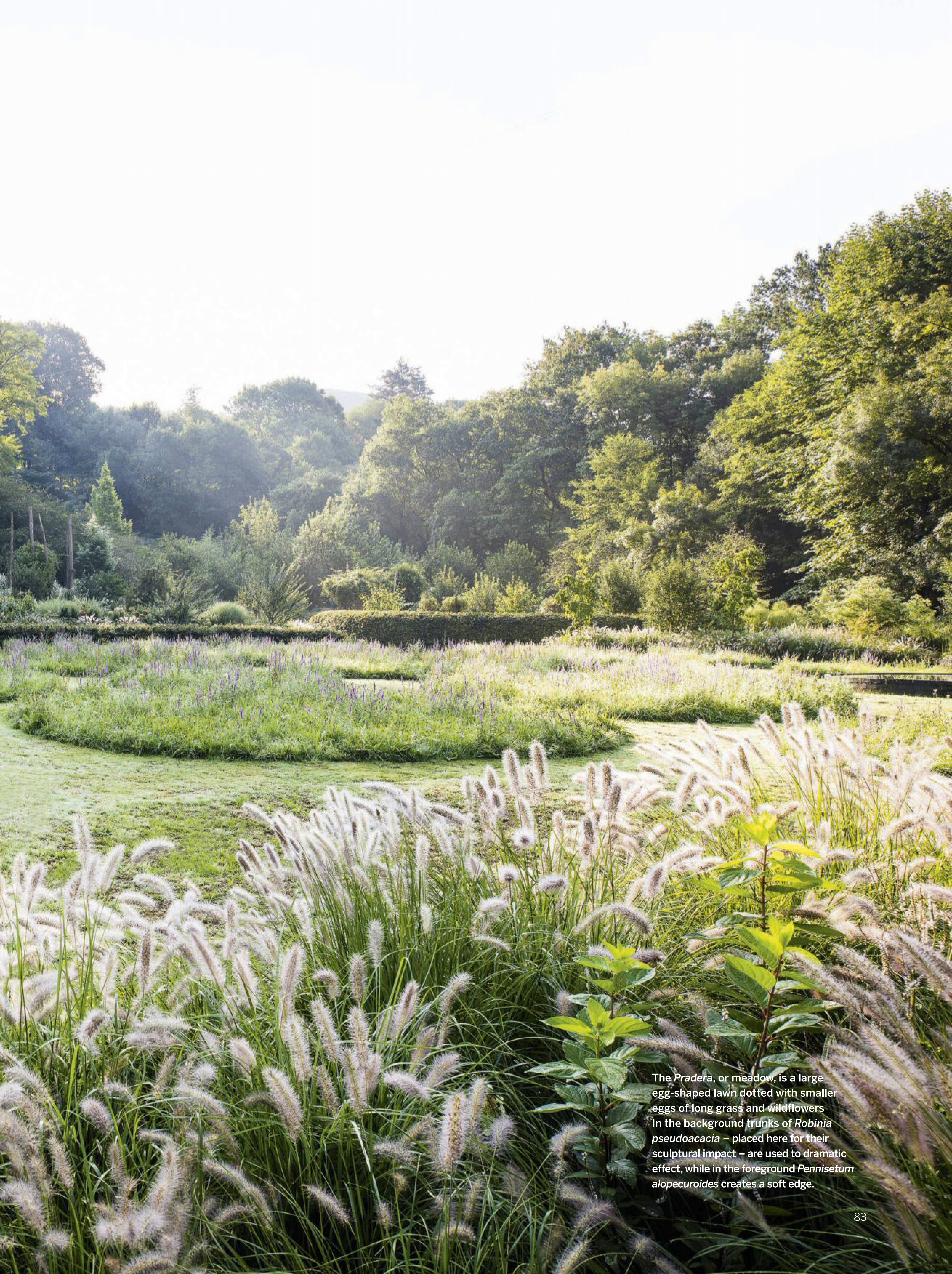
Turn the page to see more of Lur.

Facing page When seen from above, the egg shapes that dominate the garden at Lur come to the fore. Sandwiched between two areas of smaller, colour- or foliage-themed gardens are two large, ovoid gardens. At the top, is the area known as the *Pradera*, or meadow, an area of mown grass with egg-shaped patches of grass and wildflowers allowed to grow taller. Below this is the Mirror Garden with its egg-shaped pool and yellow colour theme. To the left is the practice's studio with its grass roof and a series of egg-shaped cement planters filled with *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum'.

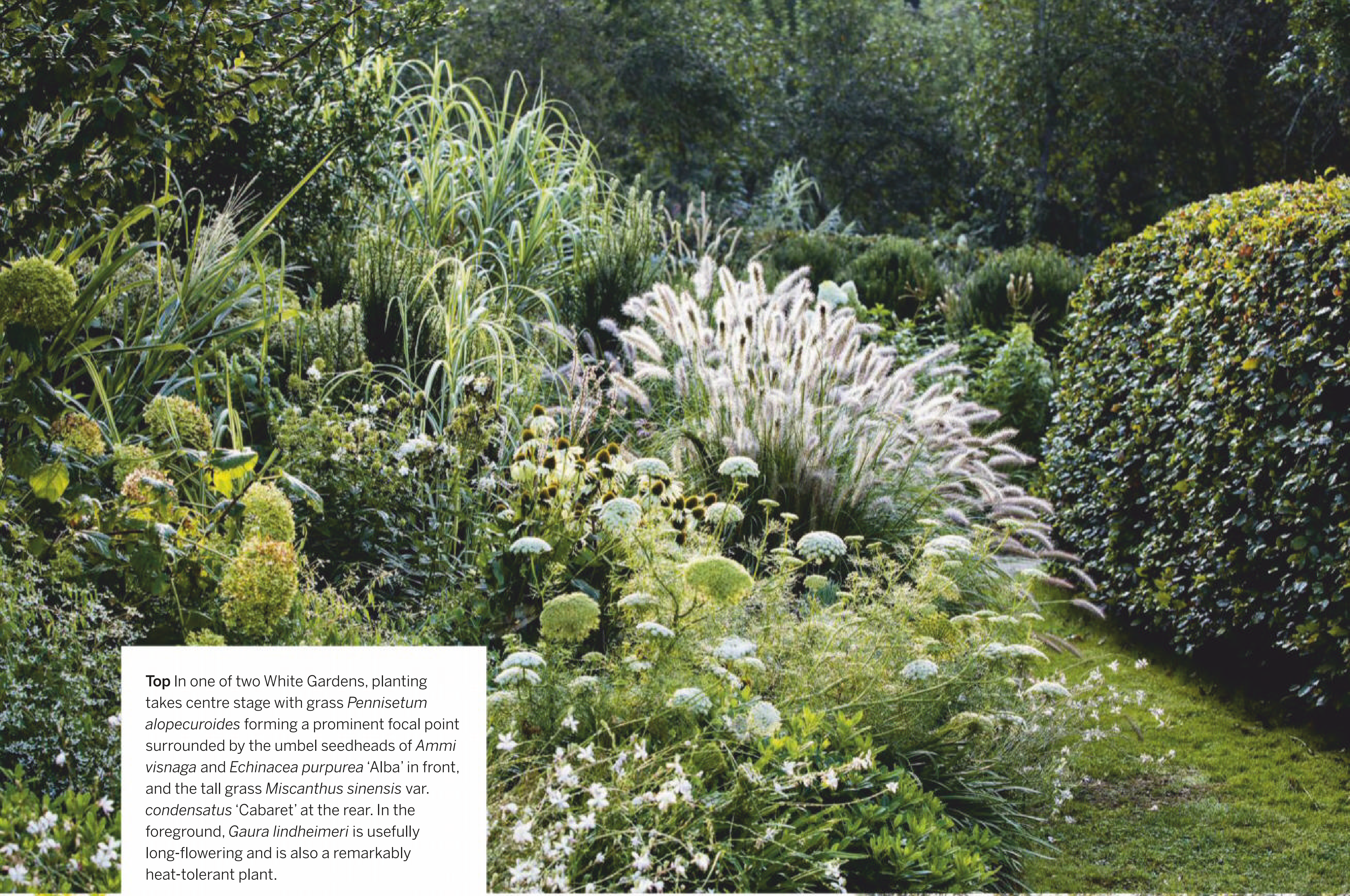


There is a powerful energy and highly inventive creativity. All enclosed in the embrace of a valley, the sides clothed in a mixture of oak woodland and pasture

The big, open *Pradera* can be seen as a lawn, an empty green space, away from the intensity of much of the planting

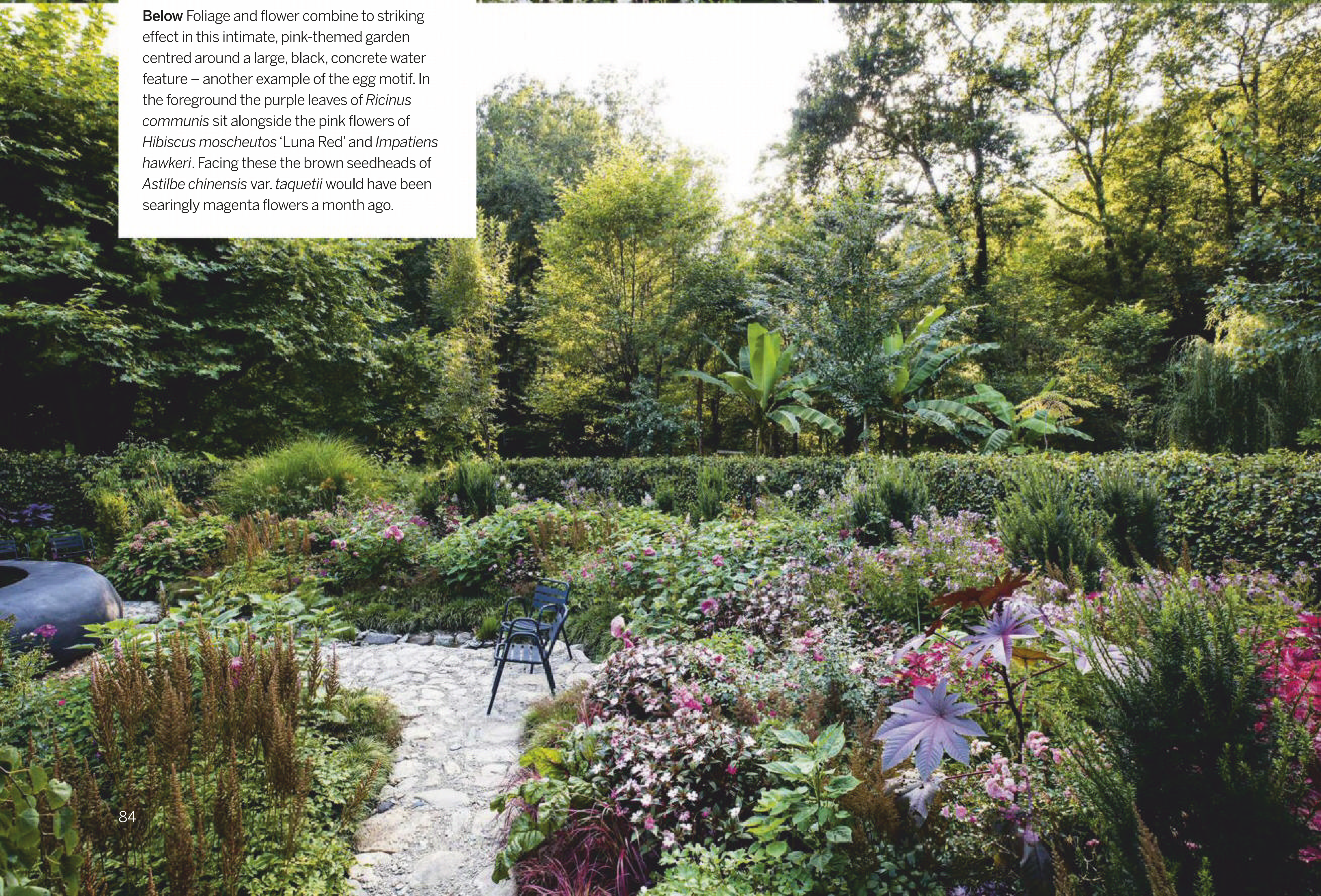


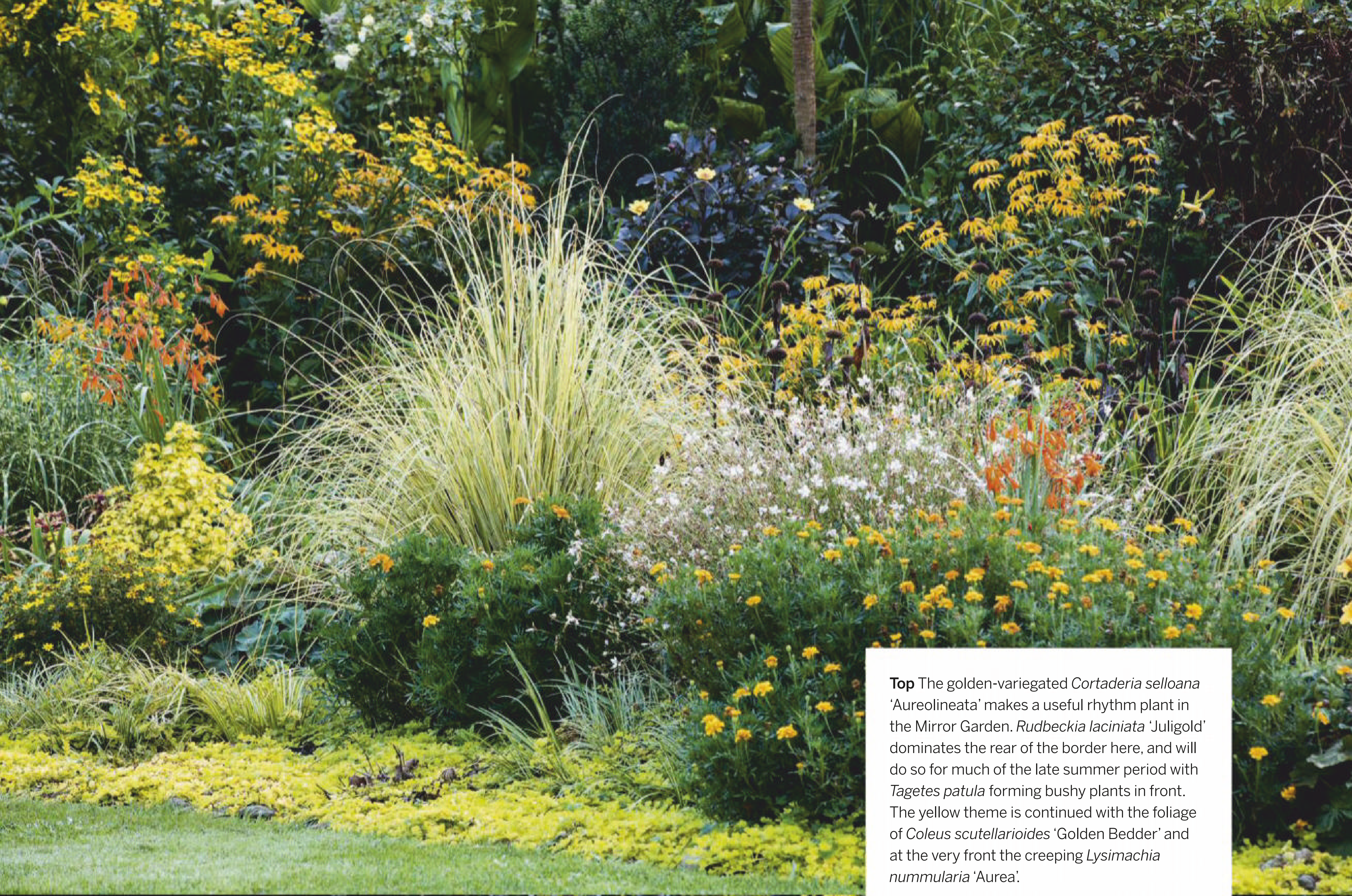
The *Pradera*, or meadow, is a large egg-shaped lawn dotted with smaller eggs of long grass and wildflowers In the background trunks of *Robinia pseudoacacia* – placed here for their sculptural impact – are used to dramatic effect, while in the foreground *Pennisetum alopecuroides* creates a soft edge.



Top In one of two White Gardens, planting takes centre stage with grass *Pennisetum alopecuroides* forming a prominent focal point surrounded by the umbel seedheads of *Ammi visnaga* and *Echinacea purpurea* 'Alba' in front, and the tall grass *Miscanthus sinensis* var. *condensatus* 'Cabaret' at the rear. In the foreground, *Gaura lindheimeri* is usefully long-flowering and is also a remarkably heat-tolerant plant.

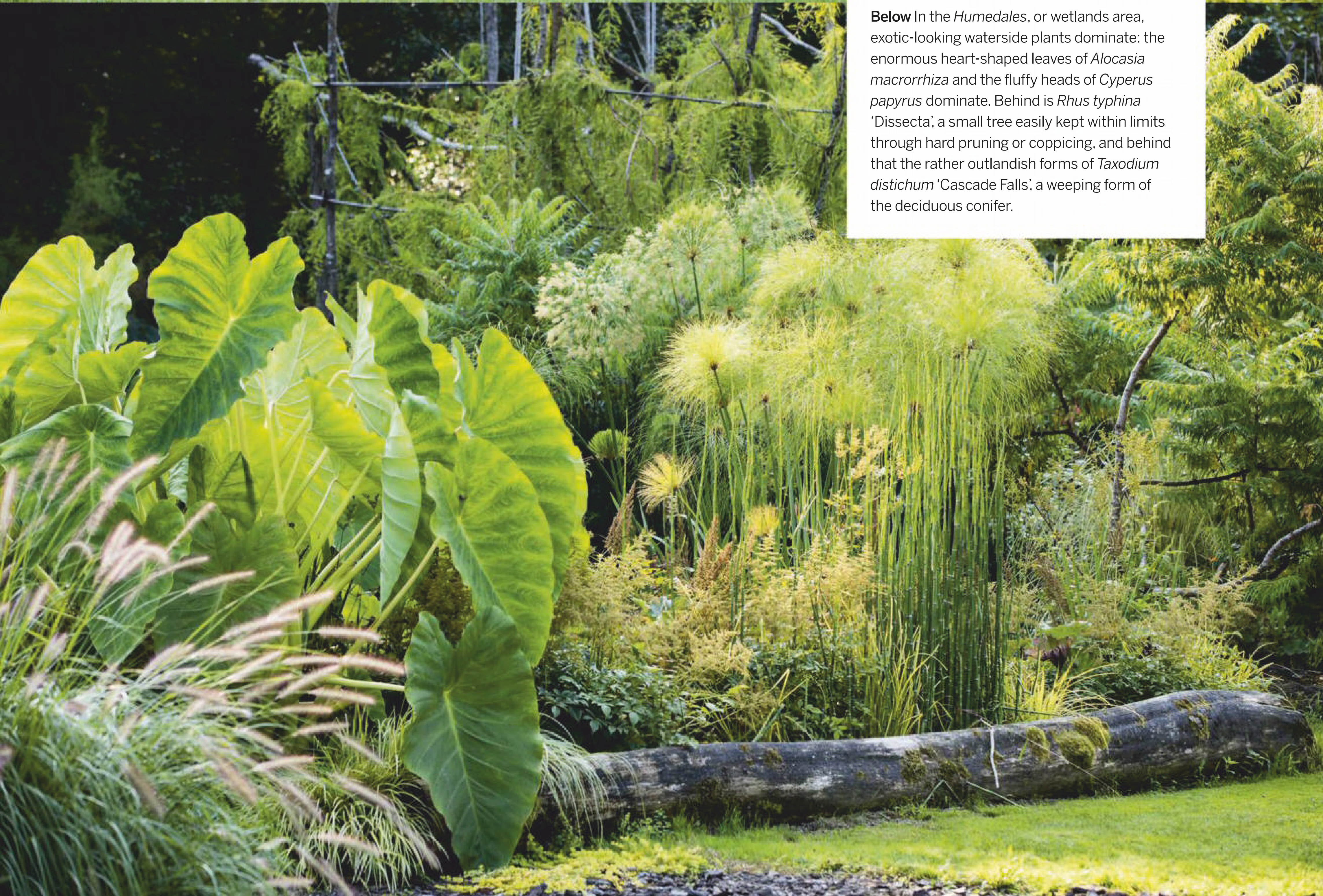
Below Foliage and flower combine to striking effect in this intimate, pink-themed garden centred around a large, black, concrete water feature – another example of the egg motif. In the foreground the purple leaves of *Ricinus communis* sit alongside the pink flowers of *Hibiscus moscheutos* 'Luna Red' and *Impatiens hawkeri*. Facing these the brown seedheads of *Astilbe chinensis* var. *taquetii* would have been searingly magenta flowers a month ago.





Top The golden-variegated *Cortaderia selloana* 'Aureolineata' makes a useful rhythm plant in the Mirror Garden. *Rudbeckia laciniata* 'Juligold' dominates the rear of the border here, and will do so for much of the late summer period with *Tagetes patula* forming bushy plants in front. The yellow theme is continued with the foliage of *Coleus scutellarioides* 'Golden Bedder' and at the very front the creeping *Lysimachia nummularia* 'Aurea'.

Below In the *Humedales*, or wetlands area, exotic-looking waterside plants dominate: the enormous heart-shaped leaves of *Alocasia macrorrhiza* and the fluffy heads of *Cyperus papyrus* dominate. Behind is *Rhus typhina* 'Dissecta', a small tree easily kept within limits through hard pruning or coppicing, and behind that the rather outlandish forms of *Taxodium distichum* 'Cascade Falls', a weeping form of the deciduous conifer.



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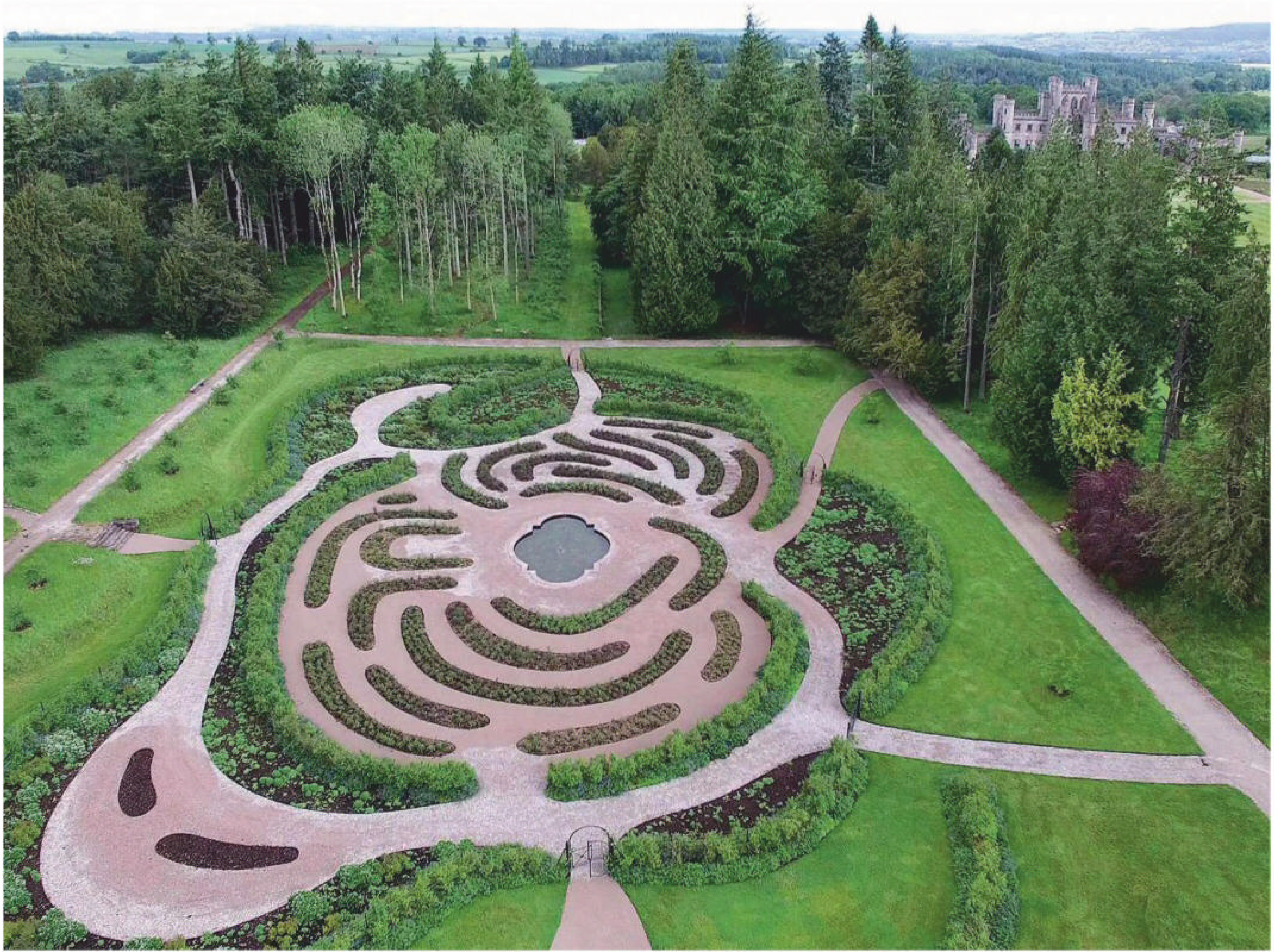
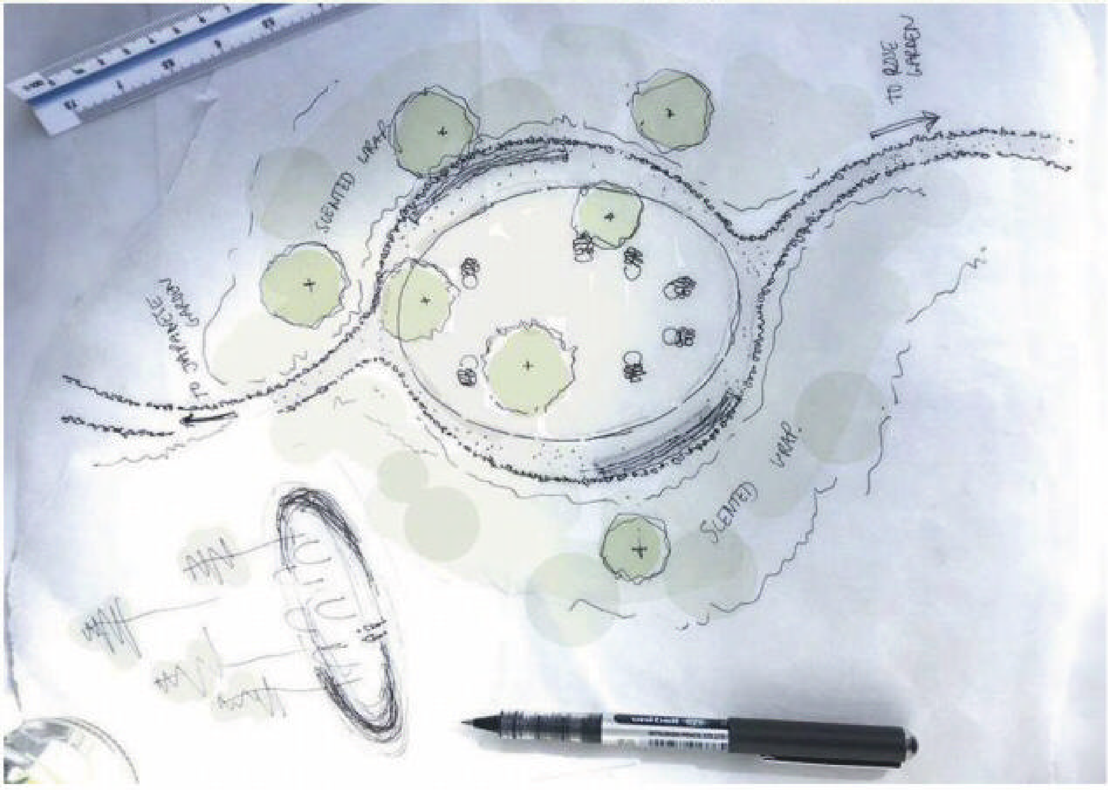


LOWTHER CASTLE GARDENS

The latest phase of Dan Pearson Studio's work at Lowther Castle Gardens in Cumbria will centre on the Western Gardens where the Rock Garden, Japanese Garden and Sweet Scented Garden (right) will be enhanced with new planting, additional seating and new paths. Most of the planting in the rose-shaped Rose Garden (above) has now been completed, and visitors will see more than 2,000 David Austin rose bushes in flower throughout summer, framing a rose-shaped water feature that has been re-capped with dressed stone. A new pergola-style summerhouse, designed and built by We are CAPCO, provides a view across the Rose Garden. **lowthercastle.org**; **danpearsonstudio.com**



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News

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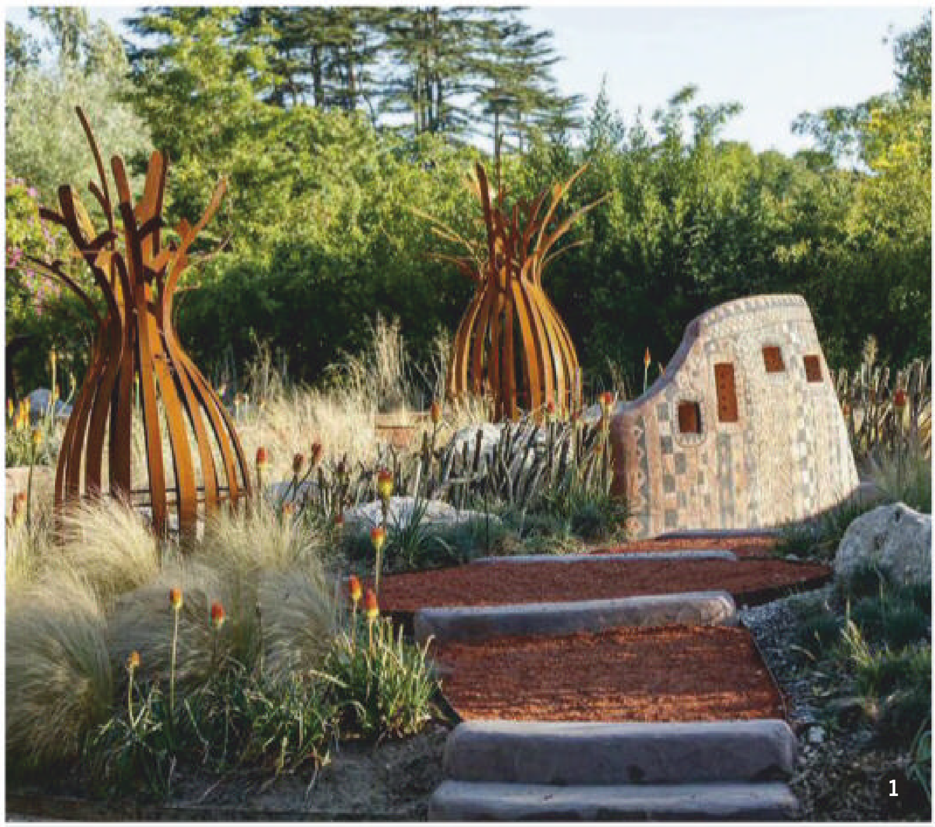
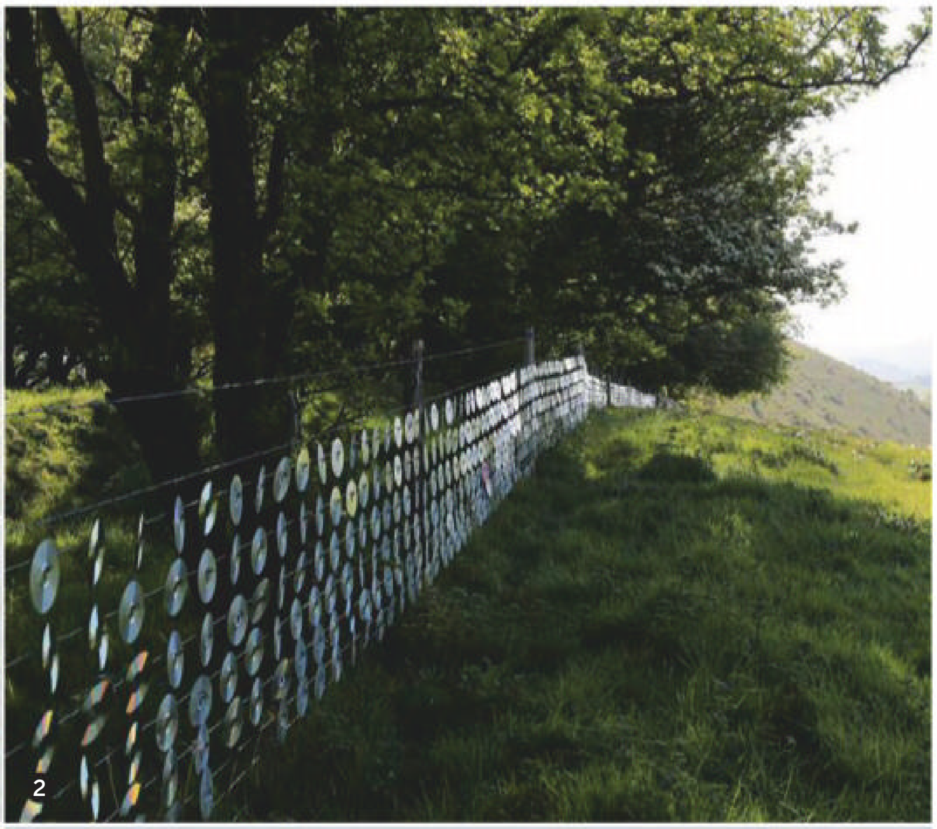
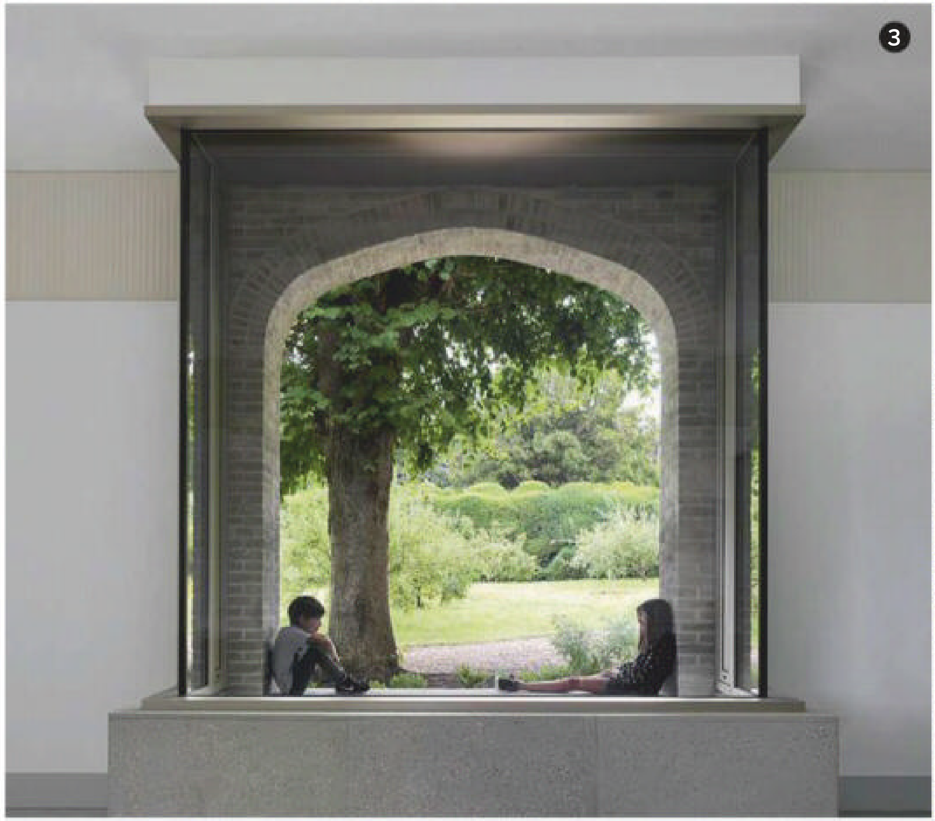
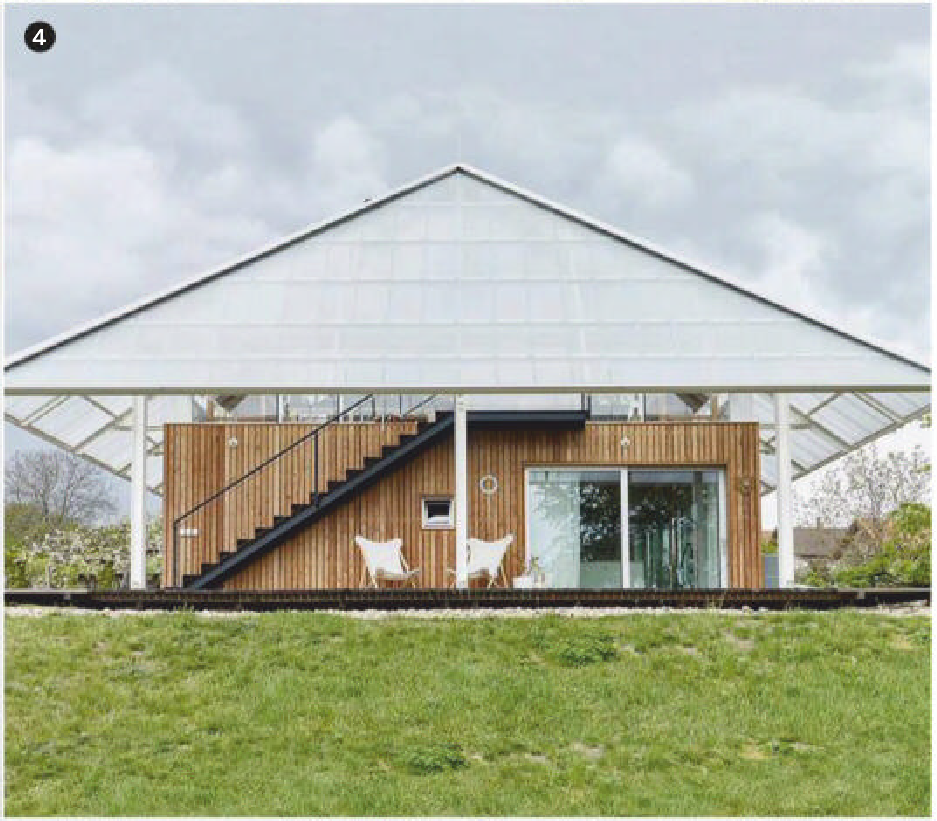








① INTERNATIONAL GARDEN FESTIVAL

The theme of the 29th International Garden Festival at Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, France, is Gardens of the Earth. Twenty-four teams from around the world have created their varied responses, which include an avenue of clematis and a garden that bursts out of the cracks in a tarmac surface. Five designers present their Carte Verte installations, including Leon Kluge's garden *Under the African Sun* (shown), which will become a permanent addition to Chaumont, and Patrick Nadeau's greenhouse display of *Tillandsia usneoides*. Until 1 November. **domaine-chaumont.fr**

② RIBBON OF LIGHT

British artist Bruce Munro, known for his large-scale light installations, has embarked on a new work that traces the ridge of Knoll Hill, near his studio in Wiltshire, creating a ribbon of light that can be seen and visited from a public footpath alongside the work. The artist was inspired to create the 1,650m *Ribbon of Light* to help raise funds for NHS workers and volunteers as he took his daily walks on the hill. He and his family have attached lines of used CDs to the existing mesh fence, which glint in the sun. To donate to Bruce's Just Giving page visit **justgiving.com/fundraising/ribbonoflight**

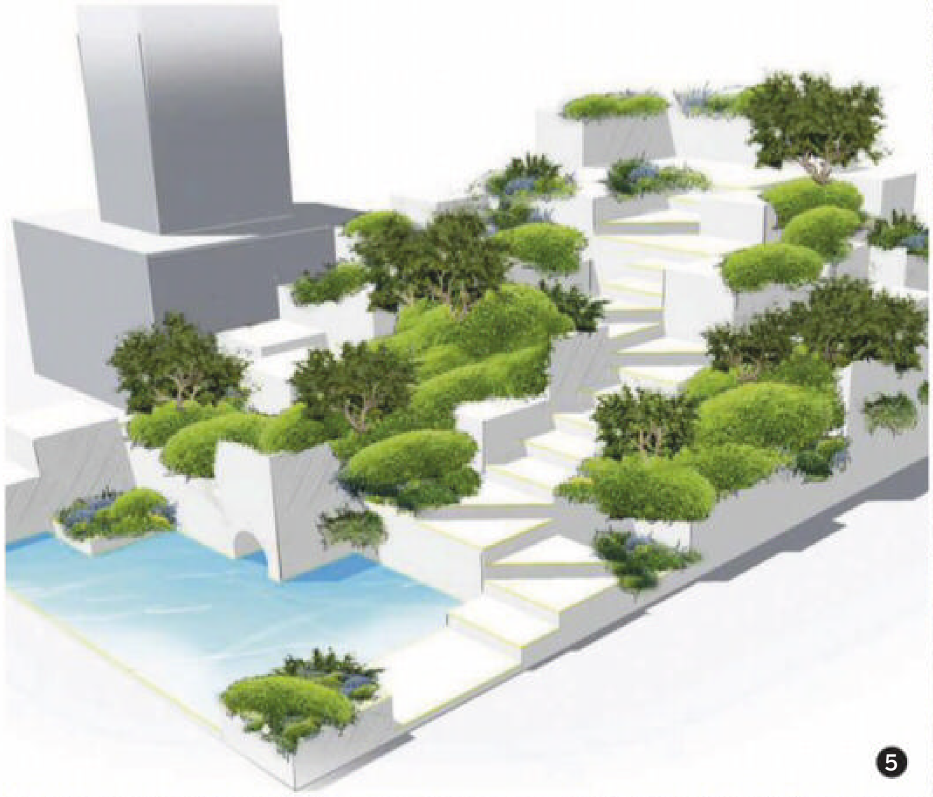
③ WALMER CASTLE GARDENS

Adam Richards Architects has designed the new brick and black zinc learning centre for Walmer Castle Gardens in Kent, with an arched picture window that frames a view of the cloud-shaped hedges bordering the kitchen garden. The same materials have been used for the adjacent café, which opens on to a Yorkstone terrace. The architects have also devised a zigzagging flight of stairs in galvanised steel and oak for the English Heritage property, which provides a link between the main grounds and The Glen, a previously inaccessible planted chalk quarry. **adamrichards.co.uk**

④ ROOFTOP GREENHOUSE

Czech architecture practice RicharDavidArchitekti has solved the problem of siting a greenhouse so it didn't block the 360-degree view of a surrounding orchard by placing it on the top of the single-storey house. The steel-framed greenhouse sits on top of a new-build family home in the Czech town of Chlumec. Its roof is made from translucent polycarbonate that overhangs the house, creating an awning for a timber terrace that wraps round the house providing access to all the rooms. The greenhouse is warmed by the excess heat rising from the house. **richardavid.cz**

1 ERIC SANDER (ERICSANDER.COM), 4 SERENA MUNRO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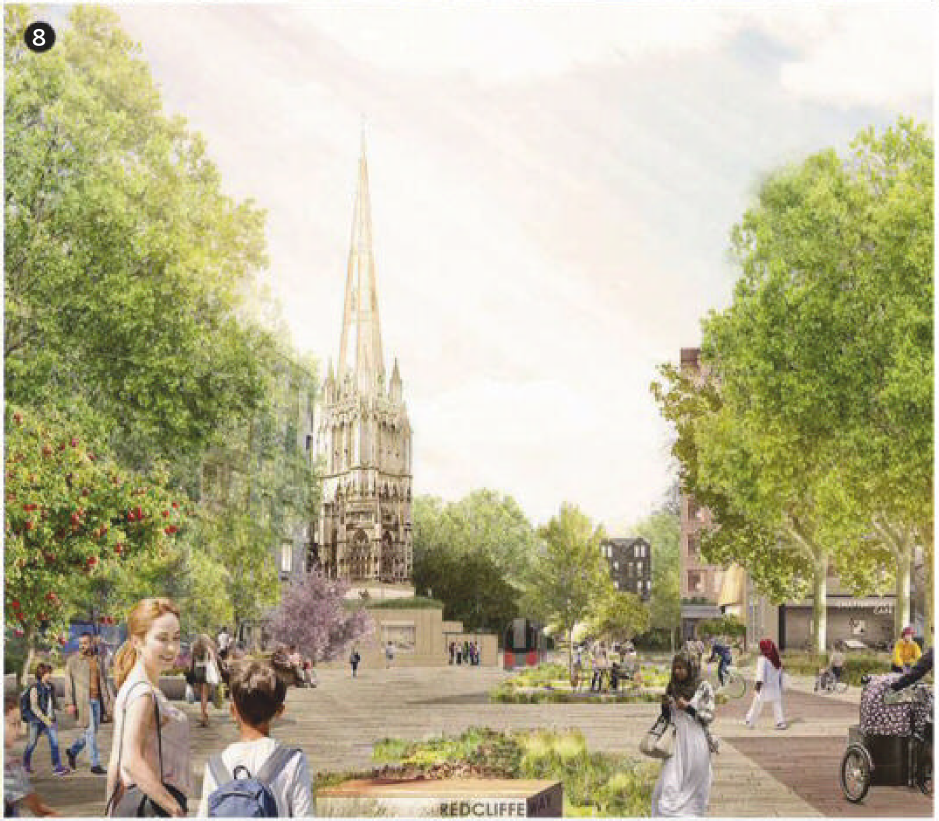


8

⑤ SCAPE DESIGN WIN

James and Helen Basson of Scape Design have won a gold medal for their show garden inspired by the Greek legend of the Odyssey at the 2020 Philadelphia Flower Show. The garden, which also won the Governor's Trophy for the Most Innovative or Unique Design, featured a progression of white forms to suggest Greek island villages, and the journey through the garden mirrored Odysseus's voyage home. Planting included evergreen shrubs, such as *Chamaecyparis obtusa*, and was designed to reflect that moment in spring when colourful annuals such as mustard *Sinapis alba* burst into life. **theflowershow.com**

⑥ NEW GARDEN FOR RHS BRIDGEWATER

Horticulturists from China have collaborated with the design team at RHS Garden Bridgewater and Greater Manchester's Chinese community to create a new Chinese-inspired garden for the RHS's newest garden. Located in the garden's original woodland, it will stretch on either side of a new stream that links the lake below Worsley New Hall with a new lake close to the entrance building. Distinct zones include a Chinese-inspired meadow and a grove of *Davidia involucrata*. RHS Garden Bridgewater is due to open in 2021. **rhs.org.uk/gardens/bridgewater**

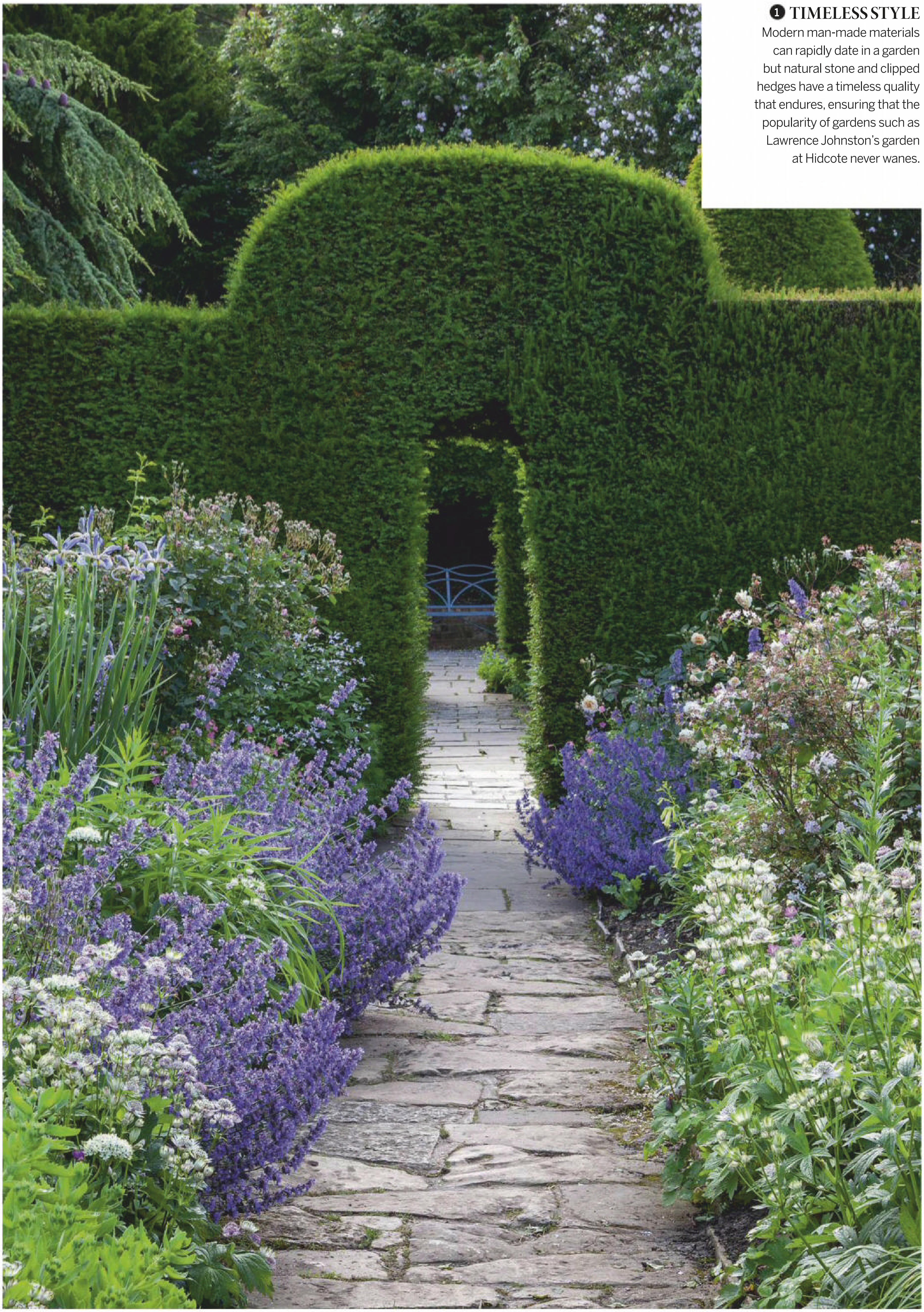
⑦ CITY OF LONDON COMPETITION

London's oldest public park, Finsbury Circus Gardens, which was first laid out in 1606, is to become a green sanctuary in the City of London once more. A substantial area of the park had been cordoned off as a work site for the rail link Crossrail in 2010. Now a two-stage competition is under way to find the most creative and sustainable design by an architect and landscape architect team that will provide a new pavilion and hard and soft landscaping. Historic features, such as the drinking fountain, will be reinstated. The shortlisted designs will be announced later in the year. **cityoflondon.gov.uk**

⑧ BRISTOL GREENING

LDA Design's Bristol studio has revealed a new vision for Bristol's Redcliffe Way, which would transform the dual carriageway into a green gateway from Temple Meads railway station into the city. The designs use a Healthy Street toolkit to make a people-friendly, green and shared space. Affordable homes, which will be no higher than six storeys with roof-top gardens and ground floors that provide local shops and community services, would replace tarmac and traffic. The scheme also puts the currently neglected Grade I-listed St Mary Redcliffe church centre stage. **lda-design.co.uk**

6 STREAM RHS / TRACY SNELL



❶ TIMELESS STYLE

Modern man-made materials can rapidly date in a garden but natural stone and clipped hedges have a timeless quality that endures, ensuring that the popularity of gardens such as Lawrence Johnston's garden at Hidcote never wanes.

JONATHAN BUCKLEY

Time

Time really is on your side when it comes to garden design. With some forward planning, and a little patience, you can create a garden that changes beautifully as time passes

WORDS ANDY STURGEON

The fundamental difference between interior design and garden design is that outdoors we have to deal not just with three dimensions but with the fourth dimension of time. Indoors you may need to accept a certain amount of wear and tear on your carpets and furnishings, but essentially nothing really changes from day to day, or even year to year. Things don't change shape. They don't grow, and nothing is ravaged by the weather.

One advantage we do have in garden design is that change is slow paced. Tellingly, one of the most visited gardens in the UK is Hidcote in Gloucestershire – an Arts and Crafts garden created more than 100 years ago. There is natural stone and brick paving, some clipped hedges and rows of trees. And everyone loves it. Natural materials don't date.

> You can use time to transform the theme or look of a garden from one month to the next, starting with a riot of spring bulbs and ending up with a white garden in midsummer

The look of a garden can change by the hour as the sun moves around the garden, not just in the shadows it creates but in the flowers that open. When the sun falls on a *Mesembryanthemum* or a Californian poppy, for example, the flowers will oblige by opening and then close again at dusk. One week to the next is different as ephemeral flowers come and go. A bearded iris lasts only two weeks. Then there are seasonal changes. The challenge here is maintaining a long period of interest perhaps by having flowers or leaves or seedheads at different time of year. Succession planting is one of the best approaches to working with time and change. Structural shrubs in a border can be underplanted, interplanted with bulbs and self-seeders and as one perennial fades a neighbouring one flourishes to fill the gap. It means that something is always going on.

You can also use time to transform the colour theme or look of a garden or border from one month to the next, starting with a riot of spring bulbs, moving through all the colours of the rainbow, and ending up with a white garden in midsummer – and all in one place. The best way to plan such an outcome is by making a spreadsheet with the months of the year, the names of the plants and putting the relevant colour in the relevant box.

The passage of time over years is more challenging. Some aspects of maturity and ageing can be good, some less so. On the whole gardens improve as they mature as long as they are looked after. Trees and shrubs become increasingly majestic, they flower more, they have better branch structure and the bark becomes more textural. But while this is happening they also create more shade, using more water and drying out the ground. What you originally planted in that moist sunny spot is now drawn and struggling and needs replacing with dry shade-loving plants. Use plants that aren't too fussy to combat this, such as nandinas, hydrangeas or aruncus, or perhaps try some of the geraniums that can happily start out in full sun and end up in some shade yet remain just as happy.

Planting density is a challenge and many gardeners end up overplanting new gardens. In perennial schemes you should plan for them to peak in three years. You get a mature-looking garden fast but in truth you will be dividing and thinning out in year five. You should theoretically leave lots of space around each plant but that would mean unsightly bare earth where weeds can colonise. Some shrubs, cistus and hebes for example, can be planted in groups rather than as individuals. You get instant maturity and over time these fast-growing plants knit together without any attention from you. Single slower growing shrubs such as rhododendrons are harder to deal with because they will ultimately spread out and their skirts will swamp and smother their neighbours. One approach is to plant perennials or annuals that are sacrificial and to accept that they are only a stop gap.

Of course perennials grow fast while the shrubs plod. This means that in year three a mixed border will be dominated by the perennials but in year ten the shrubs may rule. While this adds mass and volume and – possibly reduces maintenance – it does mean that you could lose some of the finer detail and excitement.

The challenge with time is that it passes unnoticed. Before long you will be asking yourself how on earth did that leylandii hedge get so big? Where have the alliums that you are sure you planted last year all gone?

Time will play with the scale and proportion of an original design. Keep your eye on it. □

Andy Sturgeon is an internationally renowned landscape and garden designer. He is the winner of eight Gold medals at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, including Best in Show in 2019. **andysturgeon.com**

Turn the page for more ideas on time

❷ SCENT OF TIME

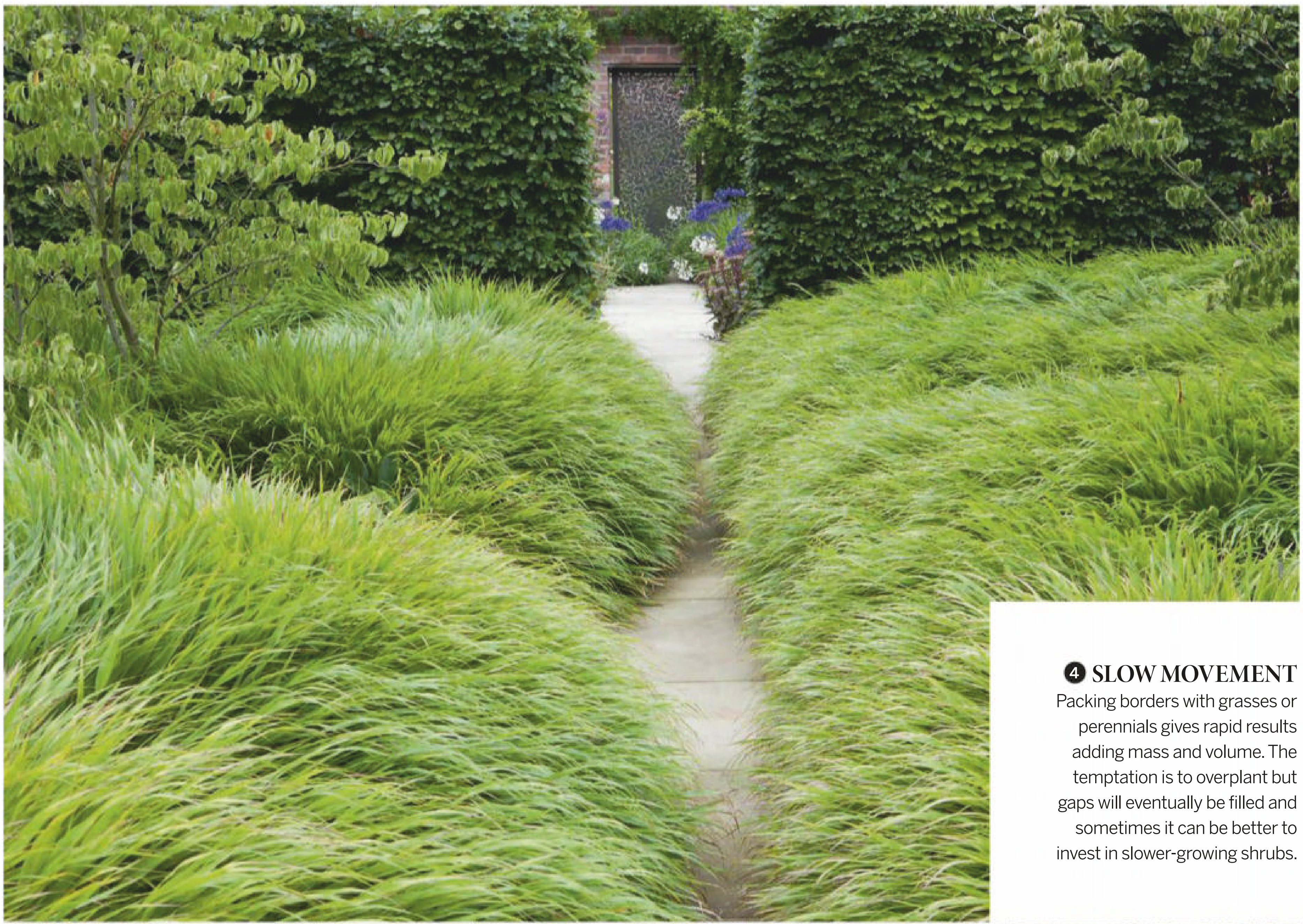
A clipped structure of topiary may take years to mature so it can be worth investing in one or two larger pieces for immediate effect. Lavender and other sub-shrubs, however, give almost instant rewards.

CAROLE DRAKE / GAP PHOTOS

❸ LEADING LIGHTS

When a young tree is first planted a single light may be sufficient to highlight its trunk and branch structure. But as the tree grows you will need to move it further away and add a second to maximise the drama.

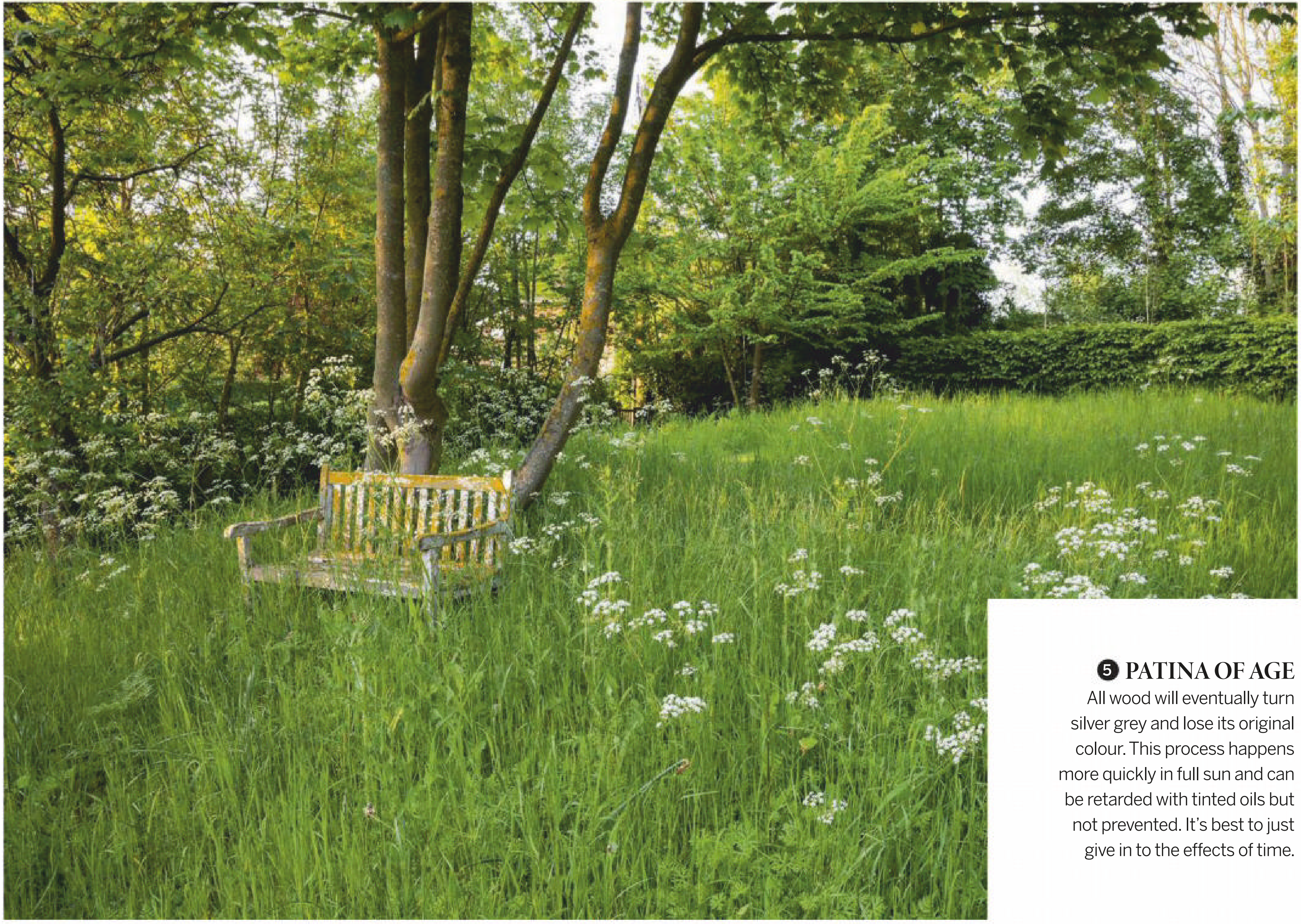
MARIANNE MAJERUS PICTURE LIBRARY / DESIGN MATT KEIGHTLEY



MARIANNE MAJERUS PICTURE LIBRARY / DESIGN TOM STUART-SMITH

❹ SLOW MOVEMENT

Packing borders with grasses or perennials gives rapid results adding mass and volume. The temptation is to overplant but gaps will eventually be filled and sometimes it can be better to invest in slower-growing shrubs.



MARIANNE MAJERUS PICTURE LIBRARY / DESIGN DEL BUONO GAZERWITZ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

❺ PATINA OF AGE

All wood will eventually turn silver grey and lose its original colour. This process happens more quickly in full sun and can be retarded with tinted oils but not prevented. It's best to just give in to the effects of time.

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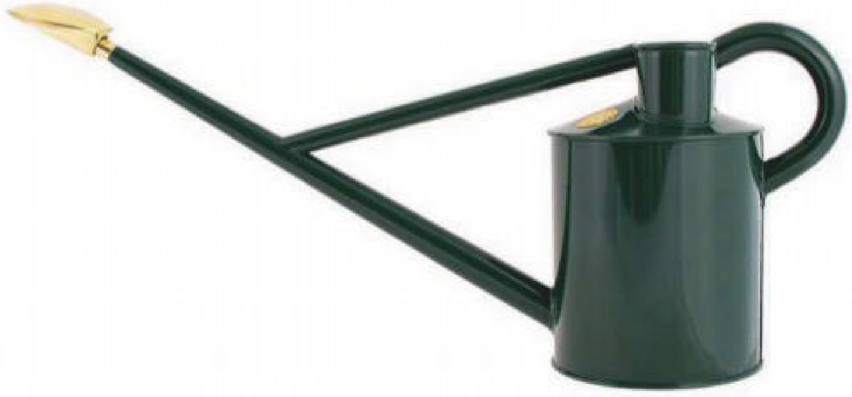

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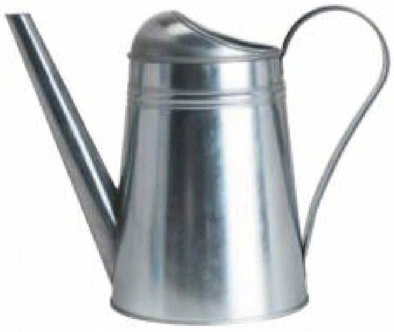
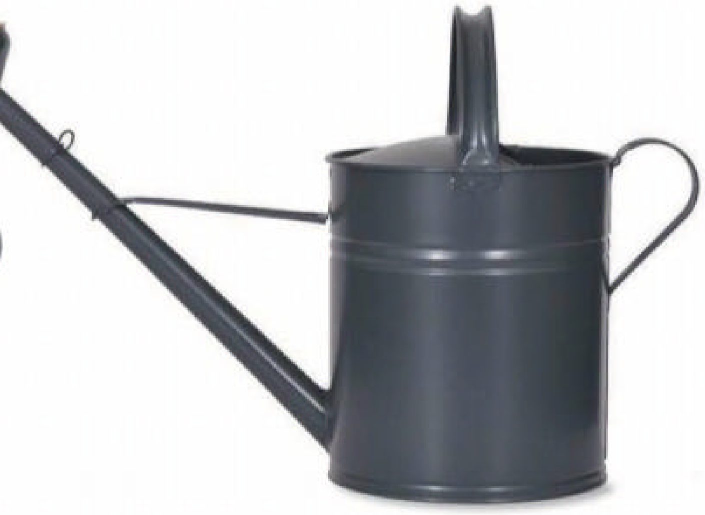
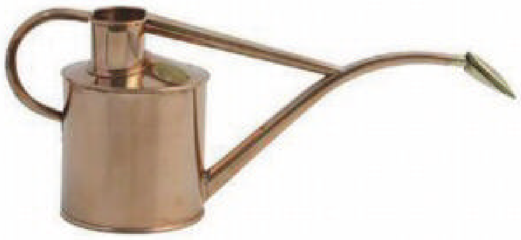
Haws Original Can,
4.5 litres, £49.99, Birstall,
0808 231 1793, birstall.co.uk



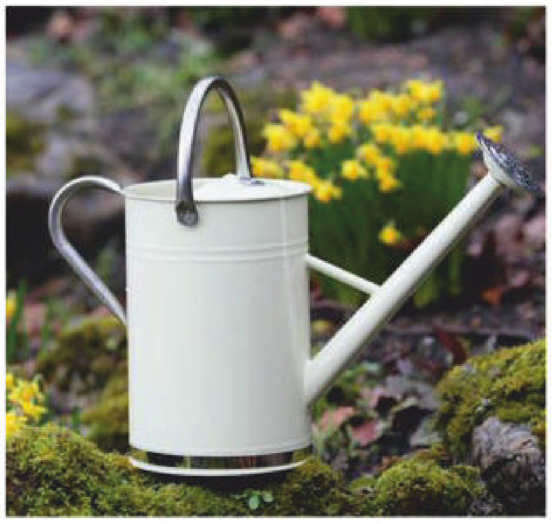
GALVANISED CHIC
Socker Watering Can,
2.6 litres, £5, Ikea,
020 3645 0000, ikea.com



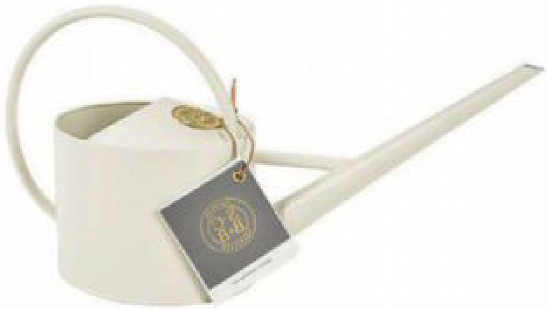
SUPER SIZED
Watering Can, in carbon,
10 litres, £40, Garden Trading,
01993 845559, gardentrading.co.uk



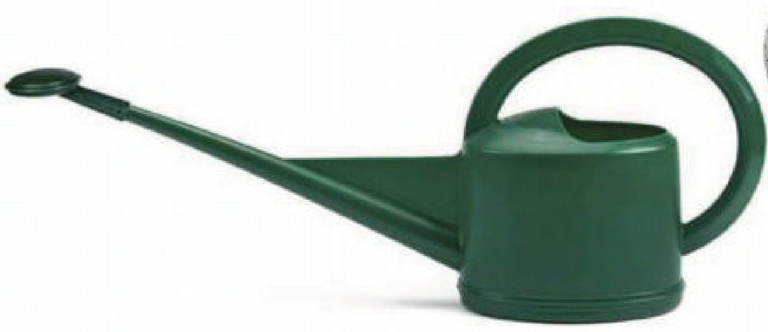
COPPER CARE
Haws Copper Indoor and Seedling Watering Can,
1 litre, £59.95, Harrod Horticultural,
0333 400 6400, harrodhorticultural.com



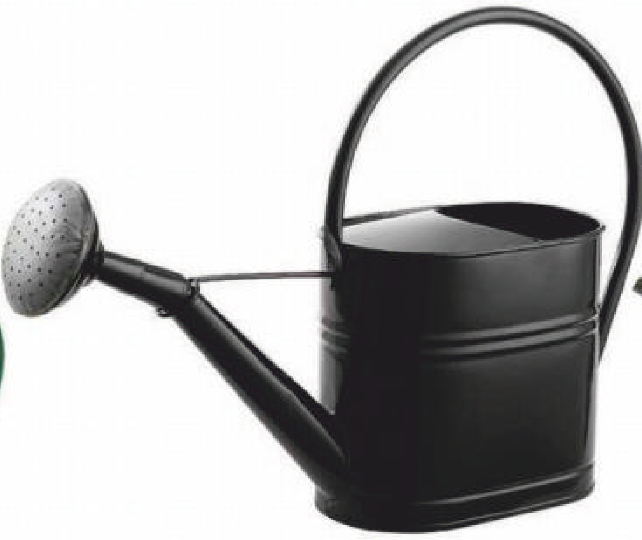
SOPHISTICATED
Metal Watering Can, vintage cream
9 litres, £29.99, Crocus,
01344 578000, crocus.co.uk



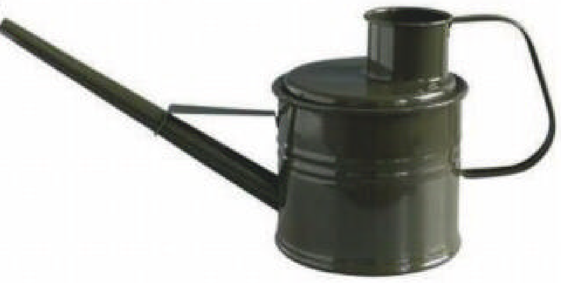
LIGHT AND BRIGHT
Buttermilk Indoor Watering Can,
1.7 litres, £22.95, Sophie Conran,
0333 240 1228, sophieconran.com



PRACTICAL
Swiss Greenhouse Watering Can,
5 litres, £31, Manufactum,
0800 096 0937, manufactum.co.uk



SLIM PROFILE
Ernst Watering Can, in black
49cm in height, £30, Nordic Nest,
020 3002 1196, nordicnest.com



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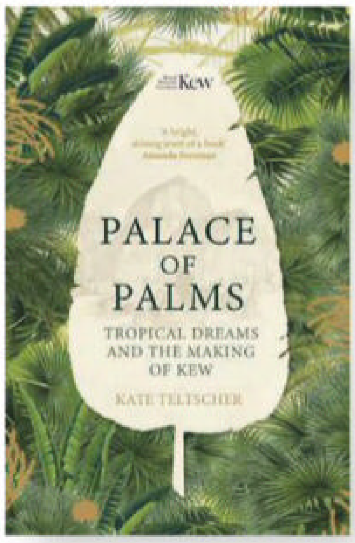
DOWNTOOLS

Book reviews, crossword, back issues

The determination of a group of eminent Victorians to create the Palm House at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, is brought vividly to life in *Palace of Palms: Tropical Dreams and the Making of Kew* by Kate Teltscher, reviewed on page 98.

MANFRED GOTTSCHALK / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

BOOK REVIEWS



PALACE OF PALMS: TROPICAL DREAMS AND THE MAKING OF KEW

by Kate Teltscher

Picador, £25
ISBN 978-1529004854

A lively tale of vividly drawn characters and their determinations to create a structure that is still functionally effective and symbolically significant.

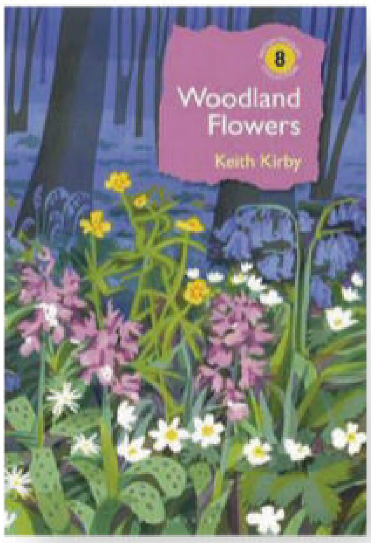
Reviewer Jodie Jones is a garden writer.

We Londoners are a complacent bunch. How often do we pause to really notice such iconic structures as Westminster Abbey as we rush about our daily business? Yet for hundreds of years, these landmarks have stood testament to the ingenuity, determination and downright hard graft of countless talented individuals.

In *Palace of Palms,* cultural historian Kate Teltscher sets out to tell the human story of the iconic Palm House at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and the men who conceived, realised and maintained this extraordinary edifice. Heading up her cast of characters is Sir William Hooker, who spent several years jostling in gentlemanly fashion to be appointed director of Kew, and the rest of his life securing his son Joseph as his successor in the post. Other key players include the maverick genius Richard Turner, iron founder, inspired engineer and architect but hopeless businessman and hilariously indiscrete writer of letters, and John Smith, the highly skilled gardener and talented self-taught botanist who, as curator, devoted himself to Kew in general and the Palm House in particular for more than 30 years.

The Victorian era was a time of huge advances in all aspects of science, technology and travel and, as Teltscher engagingly explains, palms were revered as a kind of literary and visual shorthand for the non-European and the exotic. It all came together in the magnificent glass and wrought iron structure of the Palm House, where the temperature was kept at a constant 28°C by gardeners toiling to maintain a dozen underground boilers, while elegantly dressed visitors strolled beneath a canopy of tropical foliage.

Wearing her research lightly, Teltscher tells her tale of politicking and financial wrangles, domestic tragedies and epic plant hunting expeditions with a pace and vibrancy more commonly found in novels than in academic study.



WOODLAND FLOWERS: COLOURFUL PAST, UNCERTAIN FUTURE

by Keith Kirby

Bloomsbury, £35
ISBN 978-1472949073

An informative and enlightening book for those who love woodlands but seek a deeper understanding of the myriad plants that clothe the forest floor.

Reviewer Hannah Gardner is a horticulturist and garden writer.

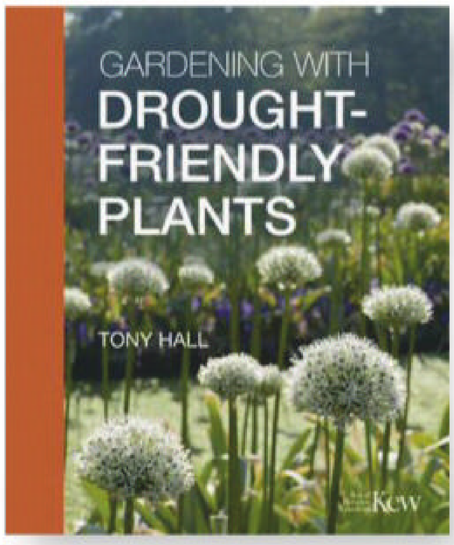
Woodland Flowers is the latest addition to The British Wildlife Collection, a series of well-researched and beautifully presented natural history reference books published by Bloomsbury.

In this exceptional and rigorous volume the respected woodland conservationist and academic Keith Kirby calls on a lifetime of research encompassing long-term analysis of woodland plants, forest ecology and rewilding, and brings an important 21st-century perspective to our understanding of woodland flora – the diverse community of plants found growing on the forest floor that are often eclipsed by the majesty of their tall woody relatives.

Chapters follow a linear timeline. Historical influences and the work of botanists past are touched on before Kirby delves into an exploration of woodland soils, mycorrhizal fungi and the fascinatingly complex question of where plants occur and why, and how they spread to the British Isles. Woodland types are grouped geographically and divided into chapters focusing on the north/west and south/east regions but usefully unpacked in the context of a broader European pattern.

The well-referenced text is infused with a lifetime of personal memories and observations that greatly add to the reader's enjoyment of his inspiring book. Acutely aware of the ecological change that climate extremes have precipitated, Kirby discusses some of the dilemmas that this poses. Illustrated profiles of our most popular ground flora species are scattered throughout the book providing additional insight and rich botanical detail.

The text is interspersed by atmospheric, well-captioned photographs, clarifying diagrams and the occasional botanical illustration that consolidate the information presented. A book that anyone with a keen interest in British woodlands should read to greatly enhance their knowledge of woodland ecology and management.



GARDENING WITH DROUGHT-FRIENDLY PLANTS

by Tony Hall

Kew Publishing, £25
ISBN 978-1842467091

A comprehensive catalogue of plants that the author has studied and which are suitable for growing in hot and dry situations.

Reviewer John Hoyland is a plantsman and writer.

This book from Tony Hall is a timely guide to plants that will flourish in the hot, dry summers that are now becoming common in northern Europe. He points out that the past 70 years have seen an unprecedented global rise in temperatures. Plants that have adapted to these conditions are to be found in the parts of the world that typically have hot, dry summers and cool, moist or wet winters, a climate generally described as Mediterranean. There are five such regions around the world, covering less than five per cent of the world's surface but home to about 20 per cent of plant species.

The main part of the book is a comprehensive encyclopaedia of plants tried and tested by the author to be able, once established, to thrive in dry conditions. More than 200 plants are catalogued, with sections on bulbs, annuals, grasses, perennials, shrubs and trees. Not all the plants are reliably hardy but each entry details the lowest temperature they can generally support. Flowering period, size and brief cultivation advice are included, as well as, most usefully, details of the author's experience of the plant.

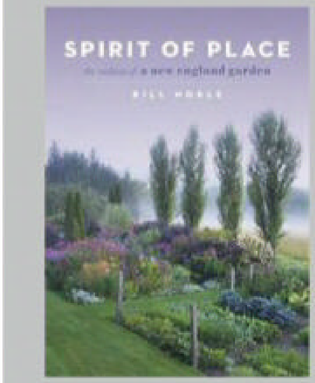
Tony Hall is manager of Arboretum and Gardens at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and for the past two decades has studied drought-tolerant plants, particularly those of southern Spain. In this book he describes how his redevelopment of the Mediterranean Garden at Kew was inspired by seeing, in the unforgiving heat near Cádiz in Spain, a rocky outcrop covered with a rich diversity of colourful plants. His knowledge of drought-tolerant plants in the wild and his experience of growing them in Britain run through this book. Gardeners who now need to adapt to hotter drier conditions will be guided towards suitable plants and will find here rich detail on how to grow them.

Other books

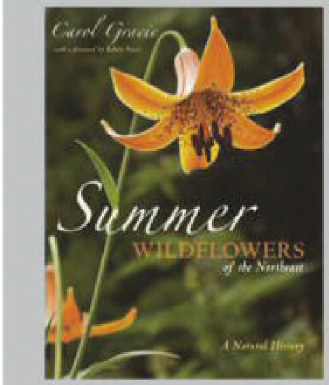
From making your own compost to creating your own tinctures, a selection of other books to consider this month.

SIMON AKEROYD
Perfect Compost
Save Money, Save the Planet

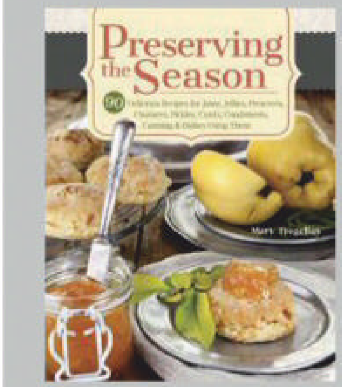
PERFECT COMPOST
by Simon Akeroyd
National Trust, £6.99
ISBN 978-1911358947
A useful guide to making good-quality compost, with information on composting set-ups and which bits of kitchen waste you can compost, and which you really shouldn't.



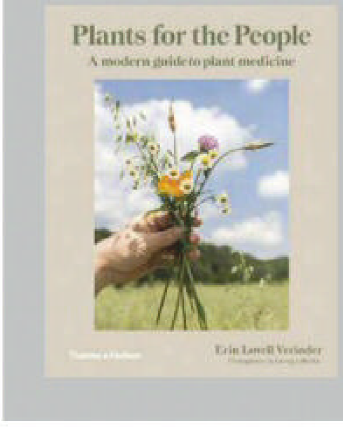
SPIRIT OF PLACE
by Bill Noble
Timber Press, £26.99
ISBN 978-1604698503
Bill Noble explores the history of New England gardens and how they were shaped by a rugged landscape, harsh climate, and European ideas about design and plantsmanship.



SUMMER WILDFLOWERS OF THE NORTHEAST
by Carol Gracie
Princeton University Press, £25
ISBN 978-0691199344
A beautifully illustrated introduction to the summer-blooming wildflowers found in northeastern USA and Canada.



PRESERVING THE SEASON
by Mary Tregellas
IMM Lifestyle Books, £14.99
ISBN 978-1504801225
Put your excess harvest to good use with this collection of more than 90, easy-to-follow recipes for jams, jellies, chutneys, marmalades, pickles and more.



PLANTS FOR THE PEOPLE
by Erin Lovell Verinder
Thames & Hudson, £19.95
ISBN 978-1760760465
A beginner's guide to using plants for wellbeing, with recipes for teas, tinctures, syrups, balms and baths, to aid common ailments from bad skin to lack of energy,

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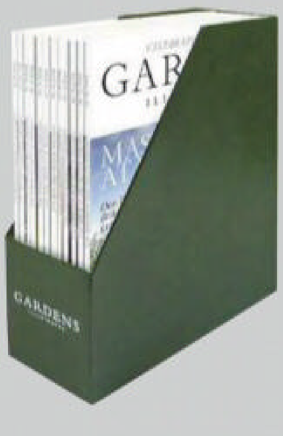

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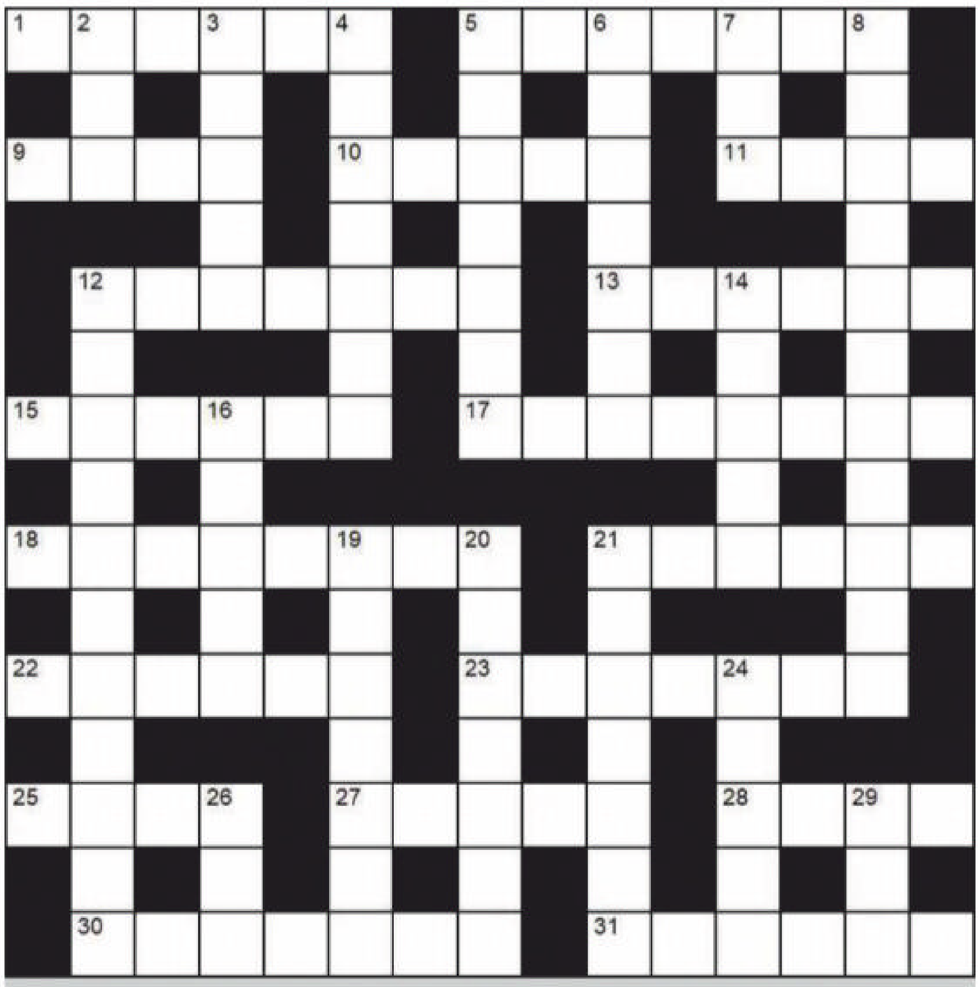
Crossword



ACROSS

1 Tall, woody grass: its genera include *Sasa* and *Fargesia* (6)
5 Flower of a fruiting tree, etc (7)
9/28 Mollycoddle plaything… name for a pink *Bergenia* cultivar (4,4)
10 An allium with half-round purple flowers and city of Florida (5)
11 These vegetables are flowers when sweet (4)
12 A bi-coloured brown/yellow rudbeckia – launched into space in 1957! (7)
13 Roots ___ a plant firmly in soil (6)
15 ___ *cyanea*, 'Cigar Plant' – part of kingcup, he admires (6)
17 Appropriate name for this earliest of tulips – 'Firth Set' perhaps (3,5)
18 White daisy-like flower from NZ… sort of a lime (sic) (8)
21 See 5 down
22 The genus of water plantain – makes salami! (6)
23 A white *Rhodanthe* daisy with yellow/brown centre – 'White Faced Clown' (7)
25 Eg plane (4)
27 Takes care of (5)
28 See 9 across
30 NZ plants with burr-like flowers – doctor removed from dracaenas (7)
31 Deadly nightshade genus – a part, possibly, taking in oxygen (6)

DOWN

2 Orchid genus synonymous with *Brassia*… found in Madagascar (3)
3 A plum-coloured dahlia – a boy transplanted on top of undergrowth (5)
4 Royal fern genus – arranged as on mud (7)
5/21 across *Gaillardia*'s common name – bed covering blossom (7,6)
6 I loved a wild… juicy plum-shaped variety of tomato (7)
7 A plant's vital juices (3)
8 *Spiraea*-like plant with fern-like leaves, genus *Filipendula* (11)
12 Genus of 'skullcap' plant – it's a cure-all oddly! (11)
14 A fragrant, burnt-orange tulip: 'Egyptian City' (5)
16 Decomposed organic material in soil (5)
19 Austere name of an early fruiting, tasty blueberry (7)
20 General name for plants popular in rockeries (7)
21 Scented plant in the *Iris* family – confused faeries! (7)
24 *Anemone blanda* var. *rosea* '___' – partly *Aspidistra*, darling! (5)
26 *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Black Lace' or '___' – initially every variety accepted (3)
29 Eg cut back a tree (3)

• Solutions to this issue's crossword will be printed in the August issue

SOLUTIONS TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE'S CROSSWORD

Across: 1 Colutea **5** Mirage **8/10** Knotweed **9** Ingot **11** Myosotis **12** Domino **14/24** Summer hyacinth **16** Air plant **18** Torpedo **21** Punica **22** St Paul **26** Dior **28** Plait **29** Elan **30** Needle **31** Tamella.

Down: 1 Candytuft **2** Lotus **3** Twister **4** Augusta **5** Matador **6** Row **7** Green **13** Milan **15** Maria **17** Nicotiana **19** Eclipse **20** Oxheart **21** Phantom **23** Twine **25/27** Ideal Red.

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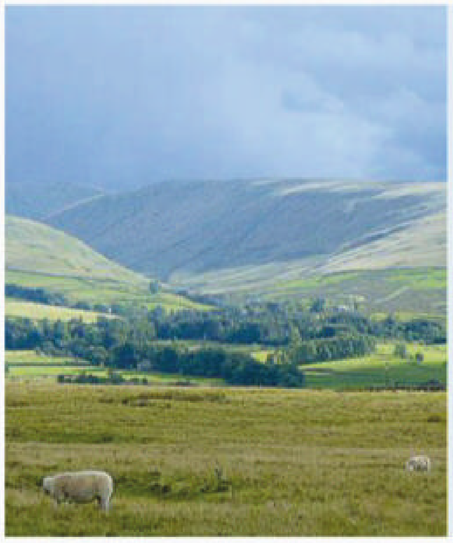

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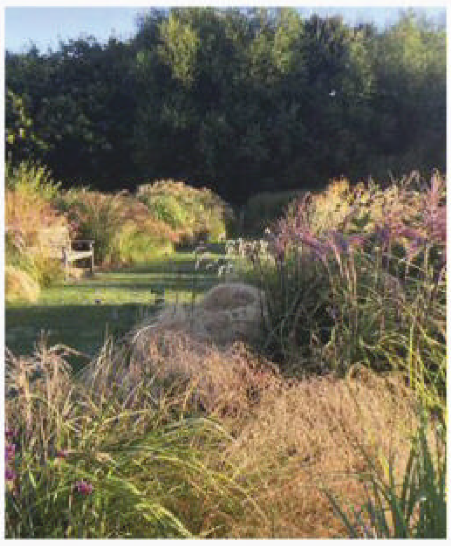

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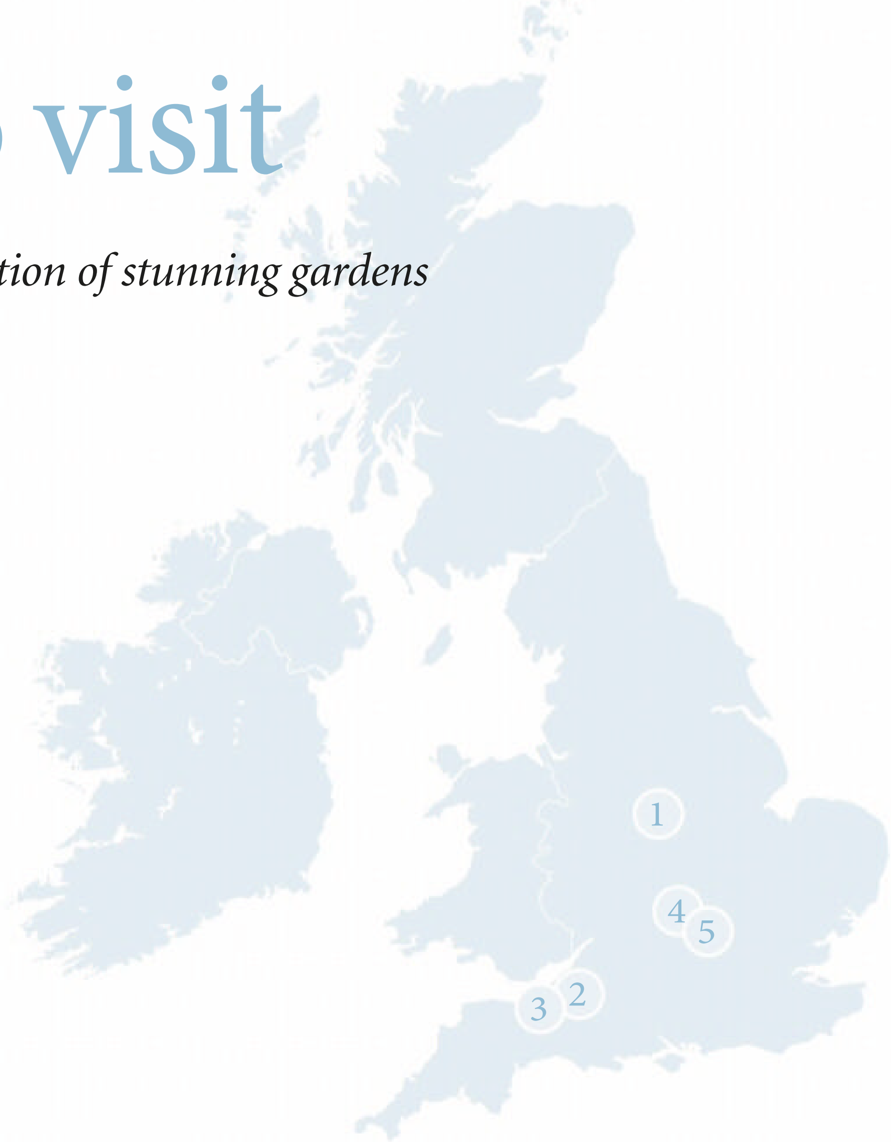

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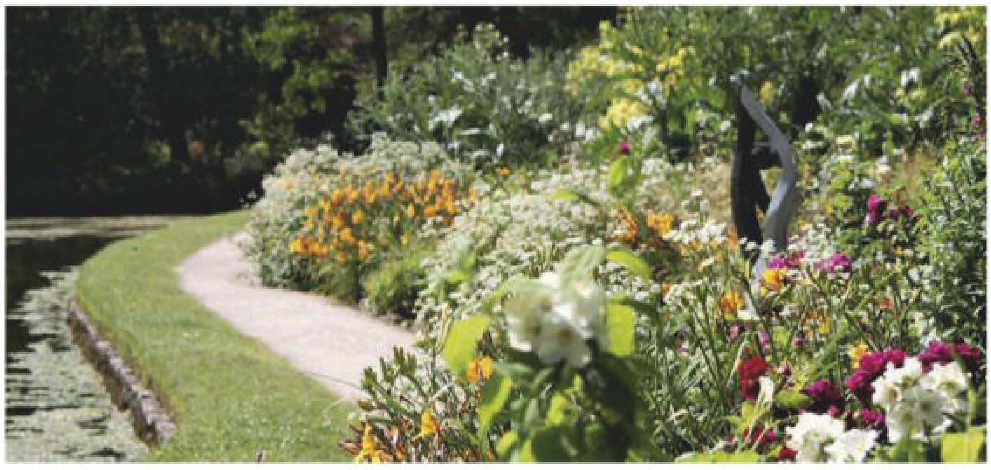

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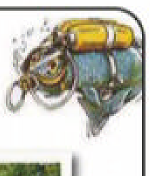
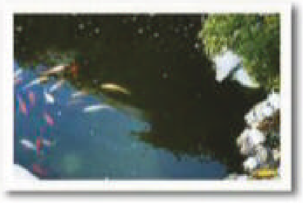


Pond before

Pond after



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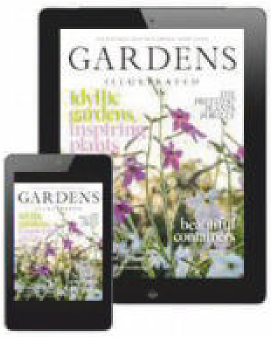

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HOUSEPLANTS

Gesneriads

From African violets to florist gloxinias, gesneriad is a wide group of flowering houseplants

WORDS **JANE PERRONE** ILLUSTRATION **PATRICK MORGAN**

Exciting houseplant deliveries don't always come in large boxes; I am equally thrilled by padded envelopes containing clear plastic bags. That's how my collection of *Smithiantha* started, in the form of several small, scaly rhizomes sent through the post. These rhizomes may alarm the uninitiated due to their resemblance to the kind of grub you might find nestled under a rotting log, but they get better.

Smithiantha is my favourite genus of the gesneriad clan, and not just because it is one of the relatively few to be named after a woman in horticulture: Matilda Smith, born 1854, an illustrator who became botanical artist in residence at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. They are native to southern Mexico, and known for their *Penstemon*-like flowers and exquisitely plushy red and green leaves. I started out with a cultivar called 'Extra Sassy', bred by US hybridiser Dale Martens, with coral-red flowers and a spotty yellow throat. The warnings in the few references I could find on *Smithiantha* informed me that these plants are tricky, requiring high humidity, warmth and strong light, my plant clearly hadn't read the rules, because it bloomed and looked glorious. Soon I was stalking about on eBay, buying more rhizomes of other cultivars: they too blossomed.

After flowering, the plants start to start to flop and fuss in winter, and that's my cue to let them dry out completely, storing the pots somewhere out of the way. Once spring is under way, I tip out the pots to remove the rhizomes, and repot in fresh compost. I'm told this is one of the reasons the plant isn't more popular – people like their houseplants to look the same, all year round. How dull. With smithianthas, you get to reboot your plants every year, and there is nothing more thrilling than watching those unpromising rhizomes burst into life.

Gesneriads are classified as flowering houseplants: they all have flowers that are fused into a tube shape, and are zygomorphic – meaning they display mirror symmetry. Yet their foliage is often just as striking. You will probably already be aware of African violets (*Saintpaulia*), Cape primroses (*Streptocarpus*), or perhaps, the florist gloxinia (*Sinningia speciosa*). The genus *Primulina* includes many cultivars with equally striking foliage and flowers, while *Petrocosmea* are compact enough for the tiniest of windowsills or shelves. Florist gloxinias and other members of the *Sinningia* genus grow from tubers, and there are many dinky *Sinningia* cultivars, such as 'Tinkerbells', that have a passionate following among gesneriad enthusiasts.

When considering how to care for gesneriads, it's hard to generalise for a range of genera that come from every continent barring Antarctica, but a few simple principles will help you start out. Midday sun will burn the leaves, so don't stick them alongside your cactus collection. My plants do very well in a north-facing kitchen windowsill with a skylight above. The hairy leaves will be damaged by any wet splashes, so water from below by placing plants in the sink and letting them soak up what they need, but only do this when the soil has dried out on the surface. Self-watering pots can also work well. Occasionally dust the foliage with a clean soft paintbrush, and turn pots regularly to make sure the plants grow evenly. Before long, visitors will be begging you for a cutting of these underrated plants.

Propagating gesneriads

Most gesneriads can be propagated from a single leaf: just remove a leaf – petiole and all – and trim the petiole with a diagonal cut. In the case of the larger-leaved species such as *Streptocarpus* and *Primulina*, a section of leaf cut with a clean, sharp blade will work just as well. Insert the leaf petioles or cut leaf sections into damp cutting compost and cover with clear plastic: before long, baby plants will begin to grow at the base. In the case of smithianthas and other gesneriads that produce scaly rhizomes, such as *Kohleria* and *Achimenes*, it is even simpler: just tease out a rhizome and pot up on its own in spring. ❑

Jane Perrone is a garden writer

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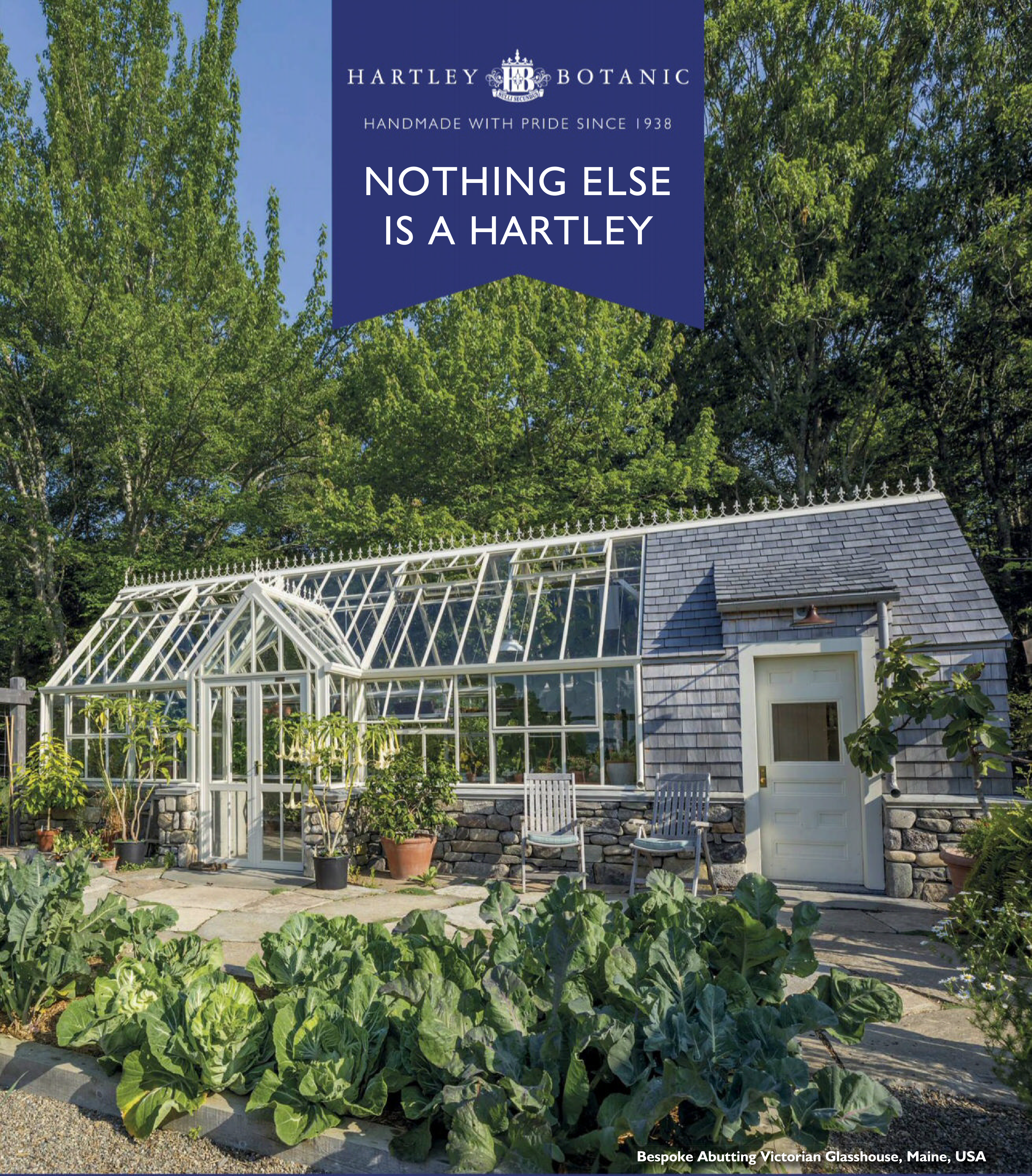

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